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## ABSTRACT

Beginning with the question "How would you define wisdom?" interviews with five Native elders focused on Native American world views or philosophies. Four themes emerged: the concept of respect, spirituality as a cultural principle permeating all aspects of life, family relationships including extended family, and various educational approaches that have influenced Native philosophy. Chapter 1 of this dissertation introduces the study by discussing indigenous world views related to Native education, the need for the study as a way to facilitate Native education, study purpose and design, background and rationale, limitations, organization, and operational definitions. Chapter 2 presents methodology and data collection techniques. Chapter 3 describes the context and background of the participants, including setting, environmental/geographical identity, cultural influences, relationships, and formal and informal teaching. The stories of the five participants are told in relation to their experiences of learning, knowledge acquisition, and development of their distinct philosophical backgrounds. Chapter 4 presents the four major themes and discusses them in relation to the literature and to the education of Native Americans. Chapter 5 summarizes the study, reflects on the need for oral Native American world views to complement formal educational philosophies, concludes that western and Native philosophies must be shared, and discusses limitations and educational recommendations. Appendixes contain supporting documents and 49 references. (SAS)

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AN INTERVIEW STUDY OF NATIVE AMERICAN PHILOSOPHICAL  
FOUNDATIONS IN EDUCATION

by

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Bachelor of Science, University of South Dakota, 1987  
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A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty

of the

University of North Dakota

in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

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August

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This dissertation meets the standards for appearance, conforms to the style and format requirements of the Graduate School of the University of North Dakota, and is hereby approved.

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

|                                                       |     |
|-------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| ACKNOWLEDGMENTS .....                                 | vii |
| ABSTRACT .....                                        | ix  |
| CHAPTER                                               |     |
| I. INTRODUCTION .....                                 | 1   |
| Native Education .....                                | 2   |
| Need for the Study .....                              | 5   |
| Purpose and Design of the Study .....                 | 6   |
| Background and Rationale .....                        | 7   |
| Delimitations .....                                   | 12  |
| Organization of the Study .....                       | 13  |
| Operational Definitions .....                         | 13  |
| II. METHODOLOGY                                       |     |
| Introduction .....                                    | 16  |
| Fundamentals of Qualitative Research .....            | 16  |
| Description of the Setting and Participants .....     | 23  |
| III. CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND OF THE PARTICIPANTS ..... | 33  |
| Introduction .....                                    | 33  |
| Description of Ciye's Setting .....                   | 34  |
| Description of Participant .....                      | 35  |

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |     |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| Description of Equay's Setting .....                                                                                                                                                                                                         | 49  |
| Description of Participant .....                                                                                                                                                                                                             | 49  |
| Description of Kossa's Setting .....                                                                                                                                                                                                         | 62  |
| Description of Participant .....                                                                                                                                                                                                             | 63  |
| Description of Tah-ah's Setting .....                                                                                                                                                                                                        | 80  |
| Description of Participant .....                                                                                                                                                                                                             | 80  |
| Description of Asu's Setting .....                                                                                                                                                                                                           | 91  |
| Description of Participant .....                                                                                                                                                                                                             | 92  |
| Summary .....                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | 102 |
| IV. THEMES AND DISCUSSION IN RELATIONSHIP<br>TO THE LITERATURE .....                                                                                                                                                                         | 104 |
| Theme One: The Concept of Respect is Referred to and is<br>Applied to Everyday Living and Lifeways. It is so Highly<br>Revered Among the Participants that They Believe That no<br>Kind of Learning or Teaching Could go on Without It ..... | 105 |
| Theme Two: Spirituality is a Cultural Principle That<br>Permeates Every Aspect of Native Life as Taught to the<br>Participants By Their Relatives and Ancestors .....                                                                        | 117 |
| Theme Three: The Participants Profess That Family<br>Relationships Among Most Native People Have<br>Always Included the Extended Family .....                                                                                                | 123 |
| Theme Four: The Participants Report That Many<br>Approaches Were the Most Powerful Agents in<br>Influencing the World View and Personal<br>Philosophies Among Native People .....                                                            | 135 |
| Summary .....                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | 159 |
| V. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS .....                                                                                                                                                                                           | 161 |
| Summary .....                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | 161 |
| Reflections .....                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | 163 |

|                       |     |
|-----------------------|-----|
| Conclusions .....     | 164 |
| Limitations .....     | 164 |
| Recommendations ..... | 165 |
| APPENDICES .....      | 169 |
| REFERENCES .....      | 174 |

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research was to focus on oral Native American world views or philosophies. Native world views and philosophies and epistemology deal with the foundation of knowledge of and about aboriginal peoples. In most cases oral traditions are thousands of years old and have maintained their philosophical value. Prior to the establishment of Western education, narratives among indigenous people were used to teach and educate in the most formal sense. Today it serves as a credible and authentic source in Native American education and is weighted with the same importance that it has always had. The re-discovery of collecting oral traditions from Native peoples deserves attention in educational institutions among scholars of predominantly Euro-American origins.

Qualitative research methods were used in the study including participant observation, interviews and a review of available literature written by or about the interview participant. Triangulated features involved traveling to the home community of the participants and participating in gatherings and visits to historical sites. Data were analyzed for themes or commonalities, and results were discussed in relationship to the literature. Recommendations for teachers and teacher educators were provided.

The question, "How would you define wisdom?" began this study. The purpose of this study was to describe what five Native elders from various Native

communities acquired in terms of their knowledge about their Native teachings. As the study developed the importance of a theoretical base concerning Native American philosophy was supplemented by the importance of documenting oral traditions.

Four themes emerged as a result of this study:

1. The concept of respect is referred to and is applied to everyday living and lifeways. It is so highly revered among the participants that they believe that no kind of learning or teaching could go on without it.
2. Spirituality is a cultural principal that permeates every aspect of Native life was taught to the participants by their relatives and ancestors.
3. The participants profess that family relationships among most Native people has always included extended family.
4. The participants report that many educational approaches were the most powerful agents in influencing the world view and personal philosophies among Native people.

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Throughout the ages of mankind, all people have had concerns with values, morals and beliefs. This research will focus on oral Native American philosophies, frequently called world views. The study of indigenous peoples' cultural knowledge and world views will take educational pedagogy regarding Native American culture beyond basic generalizations. This focal point is extremely important for indigenous people, because it will serve as a means of expression for the deepest and most profound philosophies. Due to the diverse nations found among Native Americans, a continuing theoretical base concerning what Native American philosophy in education is needs to be further developed. Thus, there is a need for all people to explore this area in education because it has been overlooked for too long. O'Meara and West (1996) found that, "Today there are few indigenous students enrolled in philosophy programs either in Canada or in the United States. In fact, across those nations there are less minorities of any kind in philosophy programs than in any other academic discipline" (p. 17). In addition, O'Meara and West state that, "It is only when Native American scholars begin to address the deeper philosophical issues underlying the familiar surface stories compiled by anthropologists and folklorists that there will be such a thing as 'Native American Philosophy'" (p.18).



In Chapter I, I will provide the reader with background information on elders, Native American world views, and my concerns regarding the lack of Native philosophies in education in both the Native traditional and western educational sense.

### Native Education

The sophistication of survival found in all people is deeply rooted; this cognitive philosophical conception is the combination of heart, mind and spirit for Native peoples. It is for this reason that sharing wisdom is very personal, as it includes the interconnectedness of all living things. Native children and students are expected by parents and extended family to be aware of and/or able to pay attention to unspoken qualities in life around them. As a result of a fast paced, highly technological and diverse country in which we live, these children are losing their learning abilities to adapt to the environment and a deepened understanding of what connects us all as living things. My consideration of this problem is what the children are learning and in developing the philosophical mind set of Native Americans.

In the past, teacher educators and teachers have been frustrated at the failed attempts to educate indigenous children in the Western educational tradition. It is my hope that I will have a better understanding of what to emphasize in this modern era when it comes to educating Native students, parents, teacher educators and teachers. Once I have experienced several philosophical views and how they relate to preparing children to become productive adults, the personal experiences and cumulative effects they have had on the interviewees will create another level of understanding of how their formal and informal education came to be of great value.

Educators in the dominant society have a responsibility to re-discover the potency of oral philosophies. This effort to involve oral philosophies is crucial in this research because many Native elders do not have degrees, or have only minimal or no experience in Western education. For the most part, their voices have not been heard beyond their communities, and yet they hold the keys to the past and now to our future as parents, teachers and human inhabitants of our immigrant nation. It is my assertion that their knowledge was grounded in a form of intellect based on the natural phenomena of non-invasive reflective thinking, intricate observation, and patience known only to privileged people. This knowledge is just as viable today as it was generations ago, because it allows people to develop and appreciate the humanness of all mankind.

Life was and is complex, full of knowledge, unpredictable; the people must wait for the truth to be revealed. Native people learned to observe nature at work and regarded its actions as lessons for survival. Wisdom came from patience. With so much to learn, the native mind functioned more effectively as a receiver of knowledge from nature, rather than as an investigator of nature (Fixico, 1993, p. 24).

The literature supports attempts to discover what education is and how it takes place. This literature also points out that when education is identified with schooling it becomes a simple thing telling us what education is. Under this same premise, it gives us our only criterion for judging and directing what goes on in schools. Archambault (1964) elaborates:

It is sometimes supposed that it is the business of the philosophy of education to tell what education should be. But the only way which does not lead us into the clouds, is discovery of what actually takes place when education really occurs. And before we can formulate a philosophy of education we must know how human nature is constituted in the concrete, we must know about the working of actual social forces, we must know about the operations through which basic raw materials are modified into something of greater value. The need for a philosophy of education is thus fundamentally the need for finding out what education really is. We have to take those cases in which we find there is a real development of desirable powers, and then find out how this development took place. Then we can project what has taken place in these instances as a guide for directing our other efforts. The need for this discovery and this projection is the need for a philosophy of education (p.3-4).

Furthermore, the only way for educators to know what manifests itself among indigenous people concerning human nature in the concrete is to ask the indigenous teachers of the culture, the philosophers, the wisdom keepers. In the open-ended questions of qualitative research the interviewee has the freedom to speak uninhibitedly about the colorful, spiritual existence of his or her realities. When, and only when, we receive the living materials from these elders that make up the foundations of educating Native children will we have the opportunity to develop a continuing theoretical base addressing Native American education.

Americans have an extremely valuable source of wealth found in the Native philosophies that have yet to be tapped. We must not overlook our indigenous roots for their survival qualities; Natives and non-Natives still exist today in many of the same ways as our ancestors have generations ago. Native philosophies go beyond landmarks, histories, and artifacts, because they give light to the thinking processes. Philosophy distinguishes landmarks, (the sacred, personal histories) and validates artifacts as spiritual representations of dreams and consciousness that is otherwise difficult to express. In a basic form, this knowledge was the foundation of Native education for children. In addition, the complexities that tied the "whole" physical, mental, psychological, and spiritual being together deserve more attention and interpretation. James (1958) could not have said it more concisely:

In our foregoing talk we were led to frame a very simple conception of what education means. In the last analysis it consists in the organizing of resources in the human being, of powers of conduct which shall fit him to his social and physical world (p.36). Education, in short, cannot be better described than by calling it the organization of acquired habits of conduct and tendencies to behavior (p.37).

#### Need for the Study

Native philosophies will provide the interaction necessary to establish Native intellectuals in the educational realms, as well as support existing western educational philosophies with roots derived from aboriginal America. This support and view will bring new consciousness to philosophy in education as well as establish a unique place and role

for Native educators. Only through the sharing of knowledge among all people can we validate and give purpose and living truth to our individual philosophies. Educational strategies that incorporate Native philosophies will give credence to Native students in the here and now. It is through understanding and accepting Native philosophies that Native people will see that their spirit cannot be conquered by colonialism, and that they do have the freedom to control their behavior and attitudes. That indigenous behavior and attitudes exist separately from their interaction with their social and economic status but can and are effected by them. Native students of all ages need to know that educators are philosophers and philosophers are educators. That as human beings we are all teachers and learners, and in our simplest understanding of life as humans we should not strive to walk in front of or behind anyone else but seek to walk side by side with all human beings. Thus, the distribution of responsibility in educating all children is shared amongst us.

#### Purpose and Design of the Study

The purpose of this study was to describe what five elders of various Native communities acquired in terms of knowledge about their Native philosophical teachings. Understanding how Native knowledge was acquired by the participants will facilitate the delivery of education to Native students, their teachers and teacher educators. This study began with one question: what was meaningful to elders in the acquisition of knowledge related to aboriginal teachings?

This study sought information about the process of acquiring wisdom and continuing to learn to teach from five elders who were perceived as knowledgeable of their own cultural philosophies. Interview lead-in questions were engaged, and the focus

of delivery of these questions was such that there was storytelling, personal accounts, mythology and histories retold. The elders were afforded every opportunity to direct the interview content. Three of the interviewees had written various articles concerning their teachings or had articles written about them. Two of the interviewees had no written materials and were, in essence, the living material.

#### Background and Rationale

Five people from diverse, distinguished Native nations from five different geographical areas participated in this study. The participants were identified as follows: one Lakota male from South Dakota, one Anishnabe (Ojibwe) female from Minnesota, one Santa Clara male from New Mexico, one Commanche female from Oklahoma, and one Yaqui female originally from Mexico. The Lakota male was selected by the Chair of my dissertation committee because the Chair was familiar with his academic work and knew also of his traditional leadership among the Lakota. Within the past two years I had the honor and privilege to be part of a Anishnabe women's ceremony. At that time the participant was the ceremonial leader. I selected this participant because of the acknowledgement she had received among the Anishnabe of Minnesota as a traditional elder. The Santa Clara male was also selected by me after I was encouraged to use his expertise by a professor of anthropology at Highlands University in Las Vegas, New Mexico. The Comanche elder was selected by a Comanche-Kiowa doctoral colleague of mine. The Yaqui participant was selected by me also, through Yaqui kinship. I felt that since the participant and I were separated by several generations that the participant would provide valuable insight.



As a lecturer on Native education over the past eight years I had become aware of the Native educators making the greatest effect in their communities. This knowledge, combined with my participation in ceremonial activities provided privileged information to me as to who was authentically seen as an elder in Native communities. It was from these experiences that I was able to make the decisions as to who participated in this study.

It would be noteworthy to mention that the Lakota and Santa Clara males both have higher degrees in Western education but still retain ceremonial leadership in their communities. It is through their eyes I see both worlds, and obviously their insight of both worlds helped me develop this study.

My eight years of experience as an elementary teacher were limited to Bureau of Indian Affairs Schools and/or tribally operated elementary schools. During this period of my teaching career I worked and struggled in the trenches of Native education, hindered by federal bureaucracy and suffering with the students from the lack of professional insight and effective teaching strategies, along with the sneers and complaints of the ill-informed non-Native teachers and support staff. However, into the sixth year of my teaching experience, Native culture, language and philosophies were slowly integrated. The curriculum itself needed technical adjustments in terms of teaching to grade levels. The non-Native staff resisted Native education and did little to help make it academically accepted. As noted by Kidwell (1991):

Initially, Indian students demanded "relevance" of education to their real-life situations. Students expected faculty members to be role models, community activists, personal counselors, sources of student loans, skillful teachers, and critics of existing academic disciplines such as history and anthropology. Some wanted knowledge that would prepare them for professional careers in Indian communities so they could provide needed services, while others wanted instruction in traditional practices and values in order to affirm their own identities. Few had college-educated parents or relatives who could give them any idea of what college education was like. Today, Indian students are more likely to see college as a stepping stone to a graduate degree and a professional career. Their expectations seem more realistic (p.45).

During this period of transition, some administrators employed resource people who were available, out of convenience rather than employing people who were authentically credentialed in the traditional community. Those who were seen as authentically credentialed lacked college degrees, but were fluent Native language speakers and members of families who held the local philosophies intact. According to Haig-Brown (1990):

Native teachers and counsellors who have an intimate understanding of Indian traditions...[and] way of life and language, are best able to create the learning environment suited to the habits and interests of the Indian child (p.231).

It is my hope as the researcher to acquire basic philosophical teachings and that this knowledge will continue to be used and developed to educate students, teachers, and



teacher educators, thus stressing the relevancy and importance of diverse philosophies and incorporating them into the curriculum.

The condition of Native American students, however, appears to be especially alarming. It is evident not only in high nonenrollment (10%), overageness (75% at least one grade behind), and low achievement test scores (Chadwick, Bahr, & Strauss, 1977; Sanders, 1987) but also in the disproportionate numbers of Native American school children diagnosed as having "emotional disorders" (Yates, 1987) or placed in special education and learning disabled programs.

Previously, I had been an instructor of Curriculum Development for Native Americans and was alarmed to see how obvious Native philosophies were absent in the texts being used. I believe the problems regarding academic deficiencies were correctly addressed, but the personalization of the "whole" and the importance of reflective thinking were missing. Some Native American students are said to be characterized by a deductive, or holistic, approach to learning (Barwill, 1981). This also could be said of my experience as a field director of a four year teacher training program on a rural reservation. These experiences were my motivational force in addressing Native philosophies in education. I agree with Gipp & Fox (1991) "That in the last 25 years, the skills approach to instruction prevailed in Indian schools, even though the professional literature of this time called for the meaning approach for teaching Indians" (p.59).

Given the latest methodologies and strategies in educating Native students (e.g., learning style differences, cooperative learning, culture, language) there was still

something missing. My inability to put my finger on the void led me back to the beginning, the values, morals, and beliefs of Native people.

Elders, because of their leadership as teachers and role-models, have also struggled with the problems concerning education of Native children. This struggle includes the loss of interest in traditional teachings and participation, including the re-establishment of respect for elders. However, due to the respect (and in some cases lack of respect) that is held for elders in Native communities, they have had some freedom to travel between support agencies and schools without question. For the most part, elders are the traditional authority regarding what will benefit the nation as a whole. Thus, their knowledge is essential if we are to succeed in educating the children of their communities. This is the source from which the true ownership of education comes. Most elders are recognized for their preservation of knowledge, for thousands of years and generations of oral traditional teachings, self discipline, and self awareness.

The list of social ills found in Native communities is endless; however, the cohesiveness of people who share similar cultures remains intact. It is the deeply embedded cultural philosophies that have held Native nations together as well as encouraged recognition and respect for all nations and people. Sharing of wisdom is crucial for Native people if they are to become a recognized part of the American multicultural environment.

"Furthermore, the failure of the schools simply cannot be satisfactorily explained by Indian resistance" (Ellis, 1994, p.99). "Perhaps we need to look more closely to the variables that promote resistance and what is going on in the classrooms. While the topic

of what to teach for cultural relevance-- the curriculum and materials-- is clearly important..."(Little Soldier, 1989,p.162). Educators need to look at the entire picture from early education to higher education and create an environment that empowers Native students and promotes success. As Wright & Tierney (1991) have found:

One certainty is that the federal government must renew its support for at-risk college students. Society can no longer afford excluding populations simply because they are different from the mainstream or prefer to remain within their own cultural contexts. All evidence suggests that Indian students and their families want equal educational opportunities. They seek better guidance in high school, more culturally relevant academic programming and counseling, and more role models on campus. Indian students do not want to be excluded from a university's door because they can not afford the education, and they do not want to be lost on a campus that doesn't value and accommodate their differences (p.18).

Students, teachers and teacher educators will benefit from the themes derived from oral philosophies of Native Americans. Few studies have addressed the importance of original philosophical teachings. Findings of the study will enhance multicultural sharing among Native peoples and their contributions to educational philosophies overall.

#### Delimitations

1. Participants in the study represented only five Native Nations of the approximate three hundred Native Nations present in the United States today.
2. The researcher could not make literal translations of the information given in the Native tongue to English.

### Organization of the Study

In Chapter I of this study the reader is provided with an introduction of Native philosophy, purpose and overview, background and rationale and operational definitions. The methodology used for this study is detailed in Chapter II. Specific information is provided on the process of this study and the use of participant observations, interviews, and document review. Techniques for data analysis and coding are provided at the end of the chapter. In Chapter III, each elder is presented by his or her own voice and tells their own story. I use thick descriptions from my observations that were documented in my field notes to acquaint the reader with the context and background of the participants. Consistent categories are provided in each participant's story to enable the reader to have the same information about each participant. The categories included: background information, environmental/geographical identity, cultural influences, relationships, and formal and informal education. Data from each elder's story are sorted and coded for similarities in Chapter IV. Consistent data are categorized, creating the development of themes. Four themes are discussed in relationship to the academic literature. I provide the reader with a summary, conclusions and recommendations in Chapter V.

### Operational Definitions

Academic material- written, documented and published work that is typically used to support references in academe.

Elder- a recognized individual who has withstood the lifelong traditions and beliefs of a specific nation, and many times is representative of those traditions on a national and international scale.

Indigenous-apply broadly to the many traditional and tribally orientated groups of people who are identified with a specific place or region and whose cultural traditions continue to reflect an inherent environmental orientation and sense of sacred ecology.

Intercultural- the relationship among aboriginal people who share respect for diversity and beliefs, including boundaries. Similar in definition to multicultural which teaches people about other cultures and the need to respect them.

Introcultural- the introduction of Native American people, their history, culture, language and philosophy. A primary and necessary study which should serve as a prerequisite to multicultural education in the United States.

Living material- the actual experience, action, or beliefs of a person or group of people.

Native American-will emphasize the specific connection to the pre-colonial inhabitants of the Americas that have a direct and ancient relationship to, or originate from, the people, ideas, and geographies of the Americas.

Native communities- an established and recognized community of Native people on or off the reservation.

Philosophy- a general set of beliefs about specific teachings in regards to existence (sometimes based on protected generational knowledge) that has influenced how you think and feel.

Theory or theoretical base- for this study the researcher has considered what five elders of various Native communities acquired in terms of knowledge about their Native philosophical teachings.

Whole- the inclusion of the mind, body, emotions and spirit of a person.

## CHAPTER II

### METHODOLOGY

#### Introduction

The methodology in this study uses many dimensions of qualitative research. This chapter presents a description of the travel involved in a mobile qualitative research and how I engaged in qualitative activities. Segment one centers on the rationale for and descriptions of the methodology of a qualitative study. Segment two recounts the procedures used in this study. A discussion of the limitations of the methodology follows.

#### Fundamentals of Qualitative Research

The presentation of a qualitative study involves defining what qualitative research is and why the researcher chose qualitative study as a framework. To demonstrate the strengths of a qualitative research I will present both the qualitative and quantitative modes of inquiry.

#### Distinctions of Qualitative Research

##### Definition:

Qualitative methods consist of three kinds of data collection:

(1) in-depth, open-ended interviews, (2) direct observation; and (3) written documents. The data from the interviews consist of direct quotations from people and their experiences, opinions, feelings, and knowledge. The data



from observations consists of detailed descriptions of people's activities, behaviors, actions, and the full range of interpersonal interactions and organizational processes that are part of observable human experience. Document analysis in qualitative inquiry yields excerpts, quotations, or entire passages from organizational, clinical or program records; memoranda and correspondence, official publications and reports, personal diaries; and open-ended written responses to questionnaires and surveys. (Patton, 1990, p. 10).

### The Qualitative Choice

Glesne and Peshkin (1992) share why we make the qualitative choice. The research methods we choose say something about our views on what qualifies as valuable knowledge and our perspective on the nature of reality. As will be explained in more detail, quantitative methods are, in general, supported by the positivist or scientific paradigm, which leads us to regard the world as made up of observable, measurable facts. In contrast, the interpretivist paradigm generally supports qualitative methods, which portrays a world in which reality is socially constructed, complex, and ever changing.

Meanwhile, since qualitative researchers deal with multiple, socially constructed realities or "qualities" that are complex and indivisible into discrete variables, they regard their research task as coming to understand and interpret how the various participants in a social setting construct the world around them.



To make their interpretations, the researchers must gain access to the multiple perspectives of the participants (p.6).

For this study I traveled and visited and observed the home sites of the participants, their sacred sites, land bases, villages and neighborhoods, including participating in various social and ceremonial gatherings. I found, that in qualitative research, "face to face interactions are the predominant distinctive feature and the basis for its most common problems" (Glesne, C., & Peshkin, A., 1992, xi).

#### Quantitative and Qualitative Modes of Inquiry

##### Quantitative Mode

###### *Assumptions*

Social facts have an objective reality

Primacy of method

Variables can be identified and relationships measured

and difficult to measure

Emic (insiders point of view)

###### *Purpose*

Generalizability

Prediction

Causal explanations

###### *Approach*

##### Qualitative Mode

Reality is socially constructed

Primacy of subject matter

Variables are complex, interwoven,

Etic (outsiders point of view)

Contextualization

Interpretation

Understanding actor's perspectives

|                                   |                                          |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------------|
| Begins with hypothesis            | Ends with hypothesis and grounded theory |
| Manipulation and control          | Emergence and portrayal                  |
| Uses formal instruments           | Researcher as instrument                 |
| Experimentation                   | Naturalistic                             |
| Deductive                         | Inductive                                |
| Component analysis                | Searches for patterns                    |
| Seeks consensus, the norm         | Seeks pluralism, complexity              |
| Reduces data to numerical indices | Makes minor use of numerical indices     |
| Abstract language in write-up     | Descriptive write-up                     |
| <i>Researcher Role</i>            |                                          |
| Detachment and impartiality       | Personal involvement and partiality      |
| Objective portrayal               | Empathic understanding                   |

(Glesne and Peshkin, 1992, p.7).

Managing validity, reliability and generalizations in a qualitative study.

The main analytic tasks that I will focus on are related to establishing patterns or regularities in the data, and then cross-checking to make sure the data are reliable and valid. It is very important to note that in qualitative research these concepts (reliability and validity) are not statistical. There are two main strategies for checking reliability and validity in qualitative material which are regularly espoused by the researcher: respondent validation and triangulation. Delamont (1992, p. 158) goes on to say:

Systematic collection of respondent's reactions to the researcher's analysis can be one element in a process of triangulation. This is a very powerful strategy for defending qualitative research against sceptics, because it makes sense to those used to experiments and surveys. Triangulation means having two or more 'fixed' or 'sightings' of a finding from different angles.

Delamont (1992) identifies three basic types of triangulation: (1) between method, (2) between investigators, and (3) within method. Between method triangulation requires that the researcher use more than one method to gather data. Glesne and Peshkin (1992) note three data gathering techniques commonly used in qualitative inquiry: participant observation, interviewing, and document collection. When a variety of data gathering techniques are used, the researcher can confirm or disconfirm patterns by comparing and contrasting the various types of data. For example, observational data can be compared to interview data and information shared during interviews can be compared across interviews.

The second type of triangulation, between investigators (Delamont, 1992), requires that more than one person study the phenomenon or setting. This technique requires that the researchers share and compare data with other researcher(s) and look for similarities and incongruencies.

As a result of the naturalistic approach to qualitative methodologies, it is in the true sense of triangulation the use of at least 2-3 sightings are necessary but are not limited. For this study I will support and confirm the data through the use of different data

collection methods. Furthermore, reasoning from particular facts leads to a general conclusion which is why qualitative methodology is inductive. In qualitative research each process in the methodology has equal importance and priorities cannot be given to one step over the other.

### Cross-cultural Studies

Cross-cultural studies occur when the researcher studies adults, children, teachers, and schools in cultures other than the researcher's own (including groups within the United States). In cross-cultural studies, it is recommended that several researchers work together and "react" to each others work.

The issue of the "otherness" of the researcher(s) should be carefully considered in cross-cultural studies. While the otherness can be seen as an advantage in that it allows the researcher to "ask naive questions that insiders would never think to ask and to see meanings in responses that insiders would consider self-evident or mundane" (Walsh et al., 1993, p. 467), care needs to be taken so that the relationship between researcher and informant is not misconstrued or mis interpreted. The issue of possible misrepresentation without the true voice from the informants (because of possible communication and/or cultural barriers) must be carefully avoided. However, familiarity with the culture(s) decreases the likelihood that verbal and nonverbal interactions will be misunderstood or misinterpreted.

### Pre-data Collection

The five indigenous mentors I was directed to and chose were partly by advice, due to their credentials and willingness to participate and partly by my inclination. I

believed that since the researcher is the measurement tool in qualitative research that it must be a situation in which I learn, grow and am moved by the surroundings. I had never met four of the interviewees and their subsequent triangulation acquaintances prior to this research, the Yaqui interviewee was a relative known to me.

### Negotiating Entry

The five mentors were telephoned and asked to be participants in the study. Those who were not convinced that this study was something they could be comfortable with were then mailed a cover-story (see Appendix A), explaining what my intentions of the study would be. Additional correspondence was necessary after the participant agreed to participate because all of the interviewees were located in different states. It took approximately nine months of dealing with gatekeepers to arrange all of the interviews and visits. All interviews were scheduled at the convenience of the participants, they were very considerate of my availability as well. Four participants were interviewed at their own homes, and one was interviewed at a relative's home.

Each participant was asked to sign a letter of informed consent (see Appendix B) before beginning the first interview. One participant was given a copy of the audio recording upon request. All participants have asked for a written copy of the finished study. All five mentors were willing to use their real identities for this study; however, the Human Subjects Review Board at the University of North Dakota approved the study on the condition that anonymity of the participants be protected, so pseudonyms for the mentors and their specific communities were created. However, it was necessary to identify the general geographical location of the participants in relation to their nationhood

status as Native American people. This identification was necessary for the research in order to identify whether or not there were possible similarities among diverse Native world views.

According to Native custom, gifts were presented at the onset of each interview. Careful attention was given to the way I presented myself so that the utmost respect could be afforded to the participant and his or her families. The participants did not receive any monetary compensation from me or the University of North Dakota for their involvement.

#### Description of the Setting and Participants

I will briefly describe in this chapter the research setting and research participants and their cultural characteristics through the descriptions that were given in the pre-data information.

This study took place in South Dakota, Minnesota, New Mexico, Oklahoma and Colorado. The focus of the study was directed to indigenous people and their environments.

Five Native adults (traditionally defined elders) participated in the study. The following briefly describe each of these adults:

1. Ciye' an Oglala Lakota, recognized ceremonial leader, scholar and artist.
2. Equay an Anishnabe (Ojibwe), recognized ceremonial leader and elder.
3. Kossa a Santa Clara Pueblo, recognized leader, scholar and artist.
4. Tah-ah a Comanche, a retired and nationally recognized teacher and elder.
5. Asu a Yaqui, keeper of oral tradition, and elder.

### Data Collection Techniques

Interviews. The first interview was conducted in May of 1996, taking approximately eight hours one day and about four hours the second day. No other person was present for this interview. The second interview took place in early July and was about eight hours long. During a supper break, food and outside interaction produced a valuable triangulation opportunity. This interview was conducted very privately, and the discussion was very personal and intimate in the sense of how women relate openly to how different experiences have affected their lives. The third interview took place in mid-July and was also a compilation of an eight hour discussion during a three day visit to the area. The interview, observation and triangulation period of the fourth participant took place over a five day visit in late July. The December (and last interview) took place over a ten day visit.

With approval of the participants, interviews were tape recorded and then transcribed. Notes were taken during each interview and travel journals were written. Time and patience were the key factors in enabling me to absorb the environmental and geographical identities of the participants. Traveling to the homes of the participants provided me an unexpected opportunity to grow and mature philosophically. By investing in enormous amounts of time reflecting on the information, I was challenged to reconsider what I had previously learned in order to keep an open picture of all of the information.

The design of the interviews was to learn what Native people have maintained as their unique abilities to learn and subsequently teach to their children (or students) in regard to their values and beliefs. In some cases, Native elders have been able to re-create



traditional psychological applications to work in a modern world. I used the general interview guide approach as discussed by Patton (1990):

An interview guide is a list of questions or issues that are to be explored in the course of an interview. An interview guide is prepared in order to make sure that basically the same information is obtained from a number of people by covering the same material. The interview guide provides topics or subject areas within which the interviewer is free to explore, probe, and ask questions that will elucidate and illuminate that particular subject. Thus the interviewer remains free to build a conversation within a particular subject area, to word questions spontaneously, and to establish a conversation style--but with the focus on a particular subject that has been predetermined (p.283).

This approach allowed me to share with the participants the questions that I would be asking them about Native philosophies, world views and or wisdom prior to the actual taping. The participants were able to share personal experiences, accounts, myths, stories and teachings in any fashion they desired; the guide enabled the participant to be re-focused whenever the need was there. The delivery of sharing knowledge was largely respected by all of the participants; they were precise and yet were warm, humorous and sincere as the interview developed. Each person shared with me the examples they thought would be most productive for this research, including teachings that would deepen my knowledge and contribute universally to Native intellect and world views.

As the researcher I was able to ask questions which sought detail about information already given or requested information to clarify points which I did not



understand, the design of the interviews was flexible, and non-inhibited. Following are some of the questions I asked:

1. Ciye' please give me an example of the customs and roles of Lakota women in relationship to the cross gender mentoring you do.
2. I asked Equay if her mother attended school, since her own educational experience was limited.
3. Much of the Tewa teachings are privileged for Tewa people, I asked Kossa if he taught these teachings to his children.
4. Multiple wives in a marriage is controversial for all people, I asked Tah-ah her feelings about this.
5. I was astounded by the amount of sufferance Asu endured to survive, and asked her how it felt to be so discriminated against all of her life.

Through their words, emotional expressions, and wisdom the five participants were re-created with descriptions using my perceptions of their personalities and world views. Their images reflect their essence and the essence of others that were present in their words and emotions. Although they are representative of different nations and cultures there was a similarity about them in their discussions of wisdom, education, family, oral tradition, roles, government, economics and identity. The Native concept of sharing was exemplified in their generosity and hospitality and cannot be described in my description of them but can be seen in the information that they shared. The description of the participants in their entirety are described in Chapter III.

### Data Analysis

For this research, data were gathered from interviews and observations of participants and their immediate surroundings. Observations played a crucial role in analyzing the data. This is how Eisner (1991) addresses observation:

The world is presented to us as an array of qualities we learn to experience. Meaning is construed from those qualities by virtue of the experiences their features generate. These experiences provide the content for the forms of representation humans have learned to use to convey what they have experienced. These forms of representation can be visual, auditory, or kinesthetic, as well as discursive, poetic, figurative, and numeric. Their social counterparts are the visual arts, music, dance, science, poetry, literature, and mathematics in its various forms. Each type of representation emphasizes and makes accessible particular aspects of content (p.179).

Participant observation. The importance and use of observations can be seen in these examples:

One can see the different locations of caves and other sacred sites where the Lakota mythology originated. The depth of Ciye's personal philosophy was reflected in his art work seen in his home.

Equay was living in close proximity to the reservation where she was born and raised; from observation one can see how the wooded plains in northern Minnesota shaped the perimeters of her life, knowledge and survival. The relationships I was able to observe

of Equay in her interaction with other tribal members supports Equay's recognition as an elder and leader of women's ceremonial traditions.

Kossa was living at the foothills of the Carson National Forest; this location was within the proximity of the four sacred mountains which are fundamental in Tewa spirituality. The work Kossa was doing on his sculpting was seen in abundance around his home. It created a wonderful connection for me and Kossa's telling of junaghi (balance) and how a particular pot came to be. The visit to Mesa Verde enroute to Kossa's house provided a fresh image of the ancient homelands of the Pueblo people. It also set the foundation for the discussion of their emergence story, philosophy and belief systems for us.

Tah-ah was living in a city close to the Comanche tribal complex and within the territorial boundaries of the Comanche. I was able to relate to Tah-ah's opinion of the pow-wows by my observation and participation of the Comanche Home Coming pow-wow that my family and I attended, (unplanned) upon our arrival. Including, my observation and participation of the Wichita pow-wow where Comanches interacted with Kiowa, Ponca, and other tribes. It was through my first hand participation in singing Comanche Hymnals and reading their written forms that I was able to establish a deeper relationship between the Comanche and other southwest tribes based on similar language dialects.

Asu was also living in a city near where her husband was killed. The actual territory boundaries of the Yaqui extend into what is now Durango, Colorado. I was able to see several generations of interaction among family members, including how respect was addressed and children disciplined. The idea of hospitality was beautifully expressed

through the stories, and the warmth of the interaction including the sharing of all of the traditional home made foods.

Not only was I able to see the interaction of the participants in traditional settings, gatherings, communities and homes, I was also able to integrate their historical information and individual stories in a more personal sense. The observations were: visual, audio, kinesthetic, discursive, poetic, and figurative. They included examples in: visual arts, music, dance, science, literature and pictures. I assumed the role of an active participant observer.

#### Coding

Delamont (1992) provided for me the basic rules. The most important rule was to never allow material to pile up unanalyzed, or even worse unread. The 'analysis' of qualitative data is a process that continues throughout the research, it is not a separate, self-contained phase. The following are his suggestions:

1. Never let data accumulate without preliminary analysis.
2. Index your data as you go; do not allow the data to pile up without knowing what you have collected.
3. Generate themes and categories as you go along, and review them frequently. It is better to have too many categories which you recombine later than to have too few.
4. Index and code your data densely: do not try to summarize them under just a few themes. Generate as many codes as you can; be 'wild' if you can.

5. Sort your data into files (either physically cutting up copies, or 'cutting and pasting' in the word processor). Keep sorting and reviewing your files, in itself that can be a process of discovery.
6. Every now and then stop and think. Do not go on mechanically working on the data without reflecting on where you are going and how you are getting there.
7. Write analytic memoranda as often as you can. Analytic memos or short notes to yourself and your supervisor in which you review what you are doing, why you are doing it, where you are going next etc.
8. Every time you make a decision, write it down and put it in your 'methods' file.
9. Try to enjoy the work. It should be an intellectually engaging and creative exercise, not a chore.
10. Read other people's work--for ideas, models, parallels, contrasts, metaphors, models, etc.
11. Read the methodological literature properly and think about how it can inform your work--do not just read it to justify what you are doing anyway! (p. 151).

Data analysis began with the first mentor interviewed (step 1). A separate spiral notebook was kept for each interview. The researcher made two copies of each notebook, one was color coded and the other was for back-up. The data was read and re-read many times before deciding on how to develop the color coding procedures (step 2 and 6).

I used highlighters (colors, and later colored designs) to assign to each code. A key was created on a separate sheet of paper in order to assure that each code was correctly identified in each notebook. The same color and color design treatment was

given to each notebook. The next step involved combining all of the codes from the five notebooks onto the same piece of paper so the researcher could see the whole picture (step 5). It was from here that the codes converged to categories. Guba (1978) suggests that in focusing the analysis of qualitative data, an evaluator must deal first with the problem of "convergence." The problem of convergence is figuring out what things fit together. This leads to a classification system for the data.

Additionally, another re-reading and sorting was necessary in order to identify what was not coded (step 5). Most of the information that was not coded had to do with personal inuendos and extensive personal interactions that was not related to the research subject.

Initially, there were close to one hundred codes; after the convergence there were sixty (step 4). Those sixty codes were further converged under six categories which included: (1) philosophy, (2) mythology, (3) family, (4) communication, (5) assimilation, and (6) education. After meeting with the chair of my doctoral committee it became clear to me that the six categories could be developed to themes. Once the themes were established, the researcher re-read the raw data and determined that they could be supported (steps 8, 9, 10, and 11). The four final themes are of this study are detailed in Chapter IV.

Glesne & Peshkin (1992) indicate that data analysis is the prelude to sensitive, comprehensive outcomes that make connections, identify patterns, and contribute to greater understanding. It is my hope as the researcher that I will provide this greater understanding. Glesne & Peshkin (1992) reflect that, in short, "researchers conduct

qualitative studies not merely for their own sake, but rather in the reasonable hope of bringing something grander than the case to the attention of others. Researchers hope for a description and analysis of its complexity that identify concepts not previously seen or fully appreciated" (p.148).



### CHAPTER III

#### CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND OF THE PARTICIPANTS

##### Introduction

The purpose of this study was to describe what five elders of various Native communities acquired in terms of knowledge about their Native philosophical teachings. Understanding what Native knowledge was acquired by the participants will facilitate the delivery of education to Native students, their teachers and teacher educators. What was meaningful to elders in the acquisition of knowledge related to aboriginal teachings? How did they keep on learning as a life long process?

This study sought information about the process of acquiring wisdom and continuing to learn to teach from five elders about their individual philosophies. Interview lead-in questions were engaged and the focus of delivery of those questions were such that there was storytelling, personal accounts, mythology, and histories retold. The elders were afforded every opportunity to direct the interview content. Three of the interviewees had written various articles concerning their teachings or had articles written about them. Two of the interviewees had no written materials and were, in essence, the living material.

Data were analyzed in several categories for each participant and later combined. The uniqueness of each mentor and his or her traditional background were created using interviewee descriptions. Interviewee descriptions included (a) background information,

(b) environmental/geographical relationships, (c) cultural influences (d) human relationships, and (e) formal and informal teaching. This chapter describes the images and experiences of the interviewees in detail, through direct quotes.

It is important to note that the traditional background of each participant is characteristic of his/her identity. The order in which each person is introduced and presented is done according to the order in which each was interviewed, Ciye', Equay, Kossa, Tah-ah, and Asu.

#### Description of Ciye's Setting

Pudding is the town from which Ciye's story is told, it is located in the south central part of the Black Hills National Forest. In relationship to the state of South Dakota the Black Hills are located in the southwest corner. The closet largest city to Pudding is Rapid City. The Black Hills are known for their beauty and wealth in natural resources. The population of Pudding is predominantly Euro-American.

According to the 1868 Fort Laramie Treaty, the Black Hills are part of the Lakota's original homelands. The Black Hills are a central figure in the mythology of the Lakota people. Approximately half of the L/Dakota population live on one of the seven L/Dakota reservations found in South and North Dakota.

Ciye' has lived in Pudding off and on during his life. As a child, he grew up attending school at Pudding and returned to the Pine Ridge Reservation for the summers. Ciye, like most people who live at Pine Ridge, is Oglala Lakota.

### Description of Participant

#### Ciye'

Ciye', has taught extensively for most of his life. Part of his career was devoted to developing children's books, teaching at tribal colleges, colleges and universities, as well as lecturing and publishing academic material on Native art. His degrees include studies in interpretive religions. He has been a ceremonial leader and a traditional mentor among his own Lakota people. Presently, he is an artist and art connoisseur.

#### Background Information

Ciye' is a Lakota word meaning older brother. I first heard of Ciye' via ceremonial circles in South Dakota and have seen some of his art work in a day school. I admired the courage in Ciyes' spiritual message displayed in his paintings. I was not introduced to Ciye' for this study; I called him after I received his phone number and information of his accomplishments in academe and ceremonies. I researched some of his writings and read those that I felt would enhance our interview.

When I initially spoke with him over the phone, I could sense that he was overwhelmed by my request and yet was willing to satisfy my inquiry with vitae and academic material. I explained the importance of his contribution to this study and asked if he would reconsider meeting and set a date. Following this phone call, I mailed him a copy of my cover story which included a scaled version of a monthly planner. Approximately one month later, I drove to his present home town in South Dakota and conducted the interview.

This interview was conducted in the living room, which was warmed by the sun through large windows. The house was located in the center of a gathering of trees in a meadow. Light wind from outside created whispering sounds in the pine trees; the sense of peace and comfort was apparent. The house was beautifully decorated and art work was in abundance. The quiet of the Black Hills atmosphere was soothing and settling and provided an in-depth quality to the research.

Ciye' begins, "I am seen as a teacher, artist and informed professional." There is a light in his eyes, and a kindness in the contact. Ciye' is dressed in blue jeans, a navy blue turtle neck and cardigan sweater and tennis shoes. He takes his glasses off and on as he speaks. By first appearance one would say that his hair is short, in a traditional manner a long braid is kept in the back. Ciye' speaks affectionately of his early beginnings, "I was born into a Lakota home in 1942 and it was a time of great self sufficiency. My family had large gardens, we had cattle, we had horses and we moved about in wagons and gathered and raised foods from nature."

#### Environmental/Geographical Identity

Identification with the land and how the geographical environment of the reservation in South Dakota supported Ciye's survival was apparent. He describes what he terms as wisdom as derived from the land.

*Many times inherent, in the making of cultural objects there are specific ideals and values expositied. Not only the making of things but also the knowledge of such things as herbs, plants and how to prepare those kinds of things that are gathered. So we're talking about herbalist, knowledge of what and herbalist*

*would have in terms of cures. The reading of the environment in terms of seasonal changes and being able to as it were, predict the weather, which of course was possible by many of our own people at one time. The old knowledge of hunting and tracking, obtaining, killing food from nature required a particular skill and that too is a form of wisdom. ...Getting your own milk and raising your own vegetables and all that.*

Not only is Ciye' aware of the importance of the environmental knowledge in his homelands, he is acutely aware of how environmental genocide has been inflicted on other Native populations--and how that in turn effects their cultural relationship to the land.

*I have tremendous sympathy for those [Native people] who have been under pressure for so very long because circumstances, geography, whatever the situation is. And have also been able to identify with some of the current forces like the coal mining. The southwest and the impact that some of the uranium mining and so forth have had on those tribes.*

*It is the non-Indians that don't understand these Native perspectives, that has brought about a lot of the destruction and manipulation of the land and people.*

As the interview develops it becomes apparent that the geographical environment is crucial in terms of identification among Native peoples. Ciye shares his feelings.

*I feel that each culture must learn its beliefs according to the context of that culture which means the environment, the sacred land, the sacred geography,*

*the southwest, the four sacred mountains. In particular, the clouds and rains that come to that place, the way people live in proximity to each other.*

The attention that was afforded to the importance of the environment and thus how Lakota understood other Native's views of their environments may or may not lead to overlapping and sharing of philosophies among Native peoples. There was admiration and respect in his words for other Natives along with affection for the land.

### Cultural Influences

The cultural influences of all five participants basically involved two areas (1) the influences that were most apparent in the specific Native culture and (2) the influences from the dominant society. Those influences include contact with social agencies, schools, governments, and churches including interaction in cities, rural communities, and a diversity among Native people and non-Native people.

Ciye's use of English in conferring with me begins to take on Indian intonations, his speech becomes more relaxed he uses word expressions that are common among Natives (e.g., uh..., you know? and humorous inclinations) when appropriate.

I look at Ciye' and asked, "What is your philosophical and or working definition of wisdom?" Ciye' begins:

*One of my philosophical statements about Lakota myths is that it is a synthesis of many, many influences including early contact with other Native groups. For example, the inter tribal trade that took place had become contact time with the Mandan, Hidatsa and Arikaras. There were ideas and goods that changed hands that were incorporated into both sides. So that even western*

*Sioux- Lakota myths are made up of a number of influences from other tribes and then later on influences with non-Indian forces.*

*I think another dimension is the result of this confluence of cultures. It is the idea of developing a personal and world view that incorporates both the traditional perspective and the reasons why we do things in the traditional setting with those modes of ethics and understanding of laws and morals from the non-Indian world. We essentially have to be bi-cultural people, we have to participate and behave in two worlds and understand those two worlds when it is appropriate to do something in one or the other. This requires a great deal of intelligence which is also part of ones world view which also gives rise to philosophy.*

Ciye' continues to move freely through topics related to Lakota culture, wisdom, and Native philosophy and beliefs.

*I think there is cultural longevity in many of the traditions than exist now and that these have been passed down through time and perhaps modified. There are parts of them that are ancient and potentially they are still done today because they still have significance.*

*At Pudding, here you have to do it differently than at grandmother's place.* Pudding is the town Ciye' lived at with his parents in order to attend school. Pudding was predominantly Euro-American and has the standards and qualities of life found most typically in middle class small towns.

*Of course there was a difference in language [at grandmother's] and a difference in compartment. There was other Indian people around who did things*



*and interacted with you. It was a totally different experience than what we did in the white world.*

Pleasantly Ciye' exhibits his professionalism through examples of his teaching experiences, he is confident and forthright in his manner:

*Indirectly, having the knowledge first hand, having learned it from people within the culture I think it made me a finer teacher because I could then understand what the life experience was like of my Native students, the elementary, junior high and later on my adult students when I taught at the community college level. Having known the culture from inside I had a great receptivity to the students and they had a great receptivity to me. Because I would blend the two, the academic material with the material and knowledge of the wisdom of the culture. And indirectly it gives me a personal philosophy which is not or which has not necessarily arisen from just academic studies. It actually springs from the wealth from deep within my life as a Lakota person.*

It is clear that within the Lakota culture that distinctions of an individual in relationship to the tribe are identified by that tribe. Those distinctions are not only influenced by present tribal knowledge but by the philosophical teachings of the culture. Ciye' explains:

*Even as a young man I was placed in a very special position once I began acting as an assistant, you know, participating in ceremonies as a leader even though I was biologically I was a fairly young person. I had the office of an elder simply because there was not many elders available who knew what I knew at that time.*

Cultural influence is seen in both the Lakota world and in the world of the dominant society. I could sense there were some issues in regard to the influence of the dominant society. Ciye' was fidgeting his look had a serious gaze I asked, "In terms of survival into the modern world, what do we teach? Ciye' responds:

*There are numerous kinds of influences [electronic media, television, film, tape recorders, radios, and the printed media] which I feel are effecting the attitudes and mentality of young people as well as middle aged people. As a matter of fact, I remember a time when women did not wear trousers, even young women and middle aged and certainly elderly, they all wore dresses.*

*You know that 50% of all Indian people live off the reservation and that's certainly true of the Sioux people. Fifty percent of Sioux live in urban communities or off the reservation. That's the importance of pow-wow's and ceremonies, you know? On the reservations they are able to participate and renew their identity these feelings, these attitudes, by participating in those activities. It has also become a dangerous place [the reservation] to live, just with the poverty and they're trying very hard to overcome the alcoholism and a number of things. But poverty just does something to people and sometimes the way they are living. It is not, but they think from certain perspectives that this is the traditional way of living. But it really is not, it is the way generated by poverty because some of the attitudes and modes of doing things are true in the inner city with Black people as they are true of Indian people living in poverty on the reservation. It is not Lakota tradition it is poverty culture that is being expressed.*

*There are certain principles that are observable and desirable in white society which are not necessarily, which do not necessarily fit in the Indian society. For example; it is possible in white society for white women and Indian women too, to be ministers in Christian churches or whatever the case is. But in Lakota culture you will not see an Indian woman leading the Sundance, see?*

Ciye' goes on to give an example of the withstanding Lakota influence as well:

*... it may be a difficult thing to say but uh... my grandparents, she had sisters [his grandma] that were born in 1892, 1896, she was born in 1898 and their parents were the first generation to live on the reservation. And there were elders, grandmas and grandpas living around when they grew up, uh? And they grew up in that oral tradition, that's why when we were children they were able to tell us all such stories in that oral tradition of storytelling. But even then, they went to... some of them, grandmother went to grade eight because that is as far as it went. And I have another auntie who went to grade 12 boarding school when they were young, but were so conditioned by their traditional culture that they were born into, these people who had never been to school. And so they were able to carry the traditions up to the 1980's.*

*Certainly, ceremony and ritual are identifiable as philosophy and world view. And I think the way one, on a daily basis treats people, the way they treat their relatives and others. In other words, human behavior itself, in how one exercises behavior among others is probably the most vital way of expressing one's philosophy. The way one treats ones children, the way one treats ones mate,*

*the way one treats ones relatives is by far the true practices of religion, spiritual religion and how you manifest those in ones life. So even the idea of a daily existence and some of it is good healthy practice too, you know, to live a life?*

*But as far as that self actualization, that had to come from my place in the culture, and through the cultural processes is the part, that I am self actualized as a Lakota man. And there are different standards, I think, for ah... a Lakota man than there are for a non-Indian man. One is to have a strong sense of history, a strong respect for spirituality, a profound respect for ones family, for ones women and children. And in a traditional Lakota sense think of the people, think of the welfare of the people.*

Ciye' very comfortably and pridefully articulates not only examples of Lakota influence in his life but in the lives of other Lakota's as well. He give examples of what Lakota cultural knowledge is practiced. Ciye' clears his throat and begins,

*The whole idea is your sharing your life and your potency with your people, see?, by translating. Anyway this is the meaning of sacrifice, it comes from the Latin 'sacrafaterious' which is to make sacred. To transform something into something else and through dispossession of it, giving it up to somebody else is why they call it a giveaway. It is because your sharing your very potency of what you are, what you know and what you are able to make with the skills in your hands and in your mind, all of that your retranslating into another form which is then distributed to the people. But Native people, indigenous people, third world people they all have their version of this capacity to create and*

*translate and share with others. Initially in ancient days it was necessary to do that so others might survive; widows, orphans, elderly people who have lost their children if you want to support them, you incorporate them into your system by adopting them as family members, looking after them, sharing the fireside the hearth, the goods.*

Obviously, the Lakota culture influenced what was learned and translated spiritually. It is here that the cultural influence is rich. Realizing the issue of gender among most Native peoples is heavily weighted I move in that direction.

I ask, "Is there a distinction among men and women in ceremony?"

I can see that this is a topic in which Ciye' has personal interest and knowledge as he doesn't hesitate and speaks enthusiastically.

*But then my metaphysical interpretation of the women dancing on the outside edge is that the lodge is female. The lodge is the earth, the ground your dancing upon, uh? It is the earth itself, the lodge. The female owns the tipi you know?, it belongs to the women, it is considered a woman, it is considered female. You go in and come back out and your born each day through the opening of the door. Anyway the Sundance lodge used to be made from tipi skins and now it is made from the boughs of a tree.*

*There was an ancient time when men's garments were made from the skins of male animals, and the women's garments were made from the skins of female animals and the decorations on their dresses were female, uh? Anyway, those are specific kinds of things that ease the functioning of the culture, you know?*

Ciye' summarizes,

*I am inclined to think that specific tribal teachings have within them a perfidy for the existence and identity of Lakota people-Lakotanness. And even though we share principles and their commonalities, each tribal group has the perfect right and privilege of teaching the world according to what they believe.*

*It is much easier to just abide by our own traditions, our indigenous traditions because I think they are profound and they have all the great truths in and that Christianity has.*

#### Relationships

Early on in the interview process it became an assertion that family and tribal relationships were going to play a big part in what is learned and acquired in terms of knowledge about Native philosophical teachings. Ciye's response to the following question was not asked with the intent of finding information on relationships, however, it supports the importance of family and tribal relationships. I ask, "What are your thoughts and feelings as a philosopher?" In an indirect and frank way he answers:

*It compels one to do as I have done in a ceremonial setting that my family and I together as a group, as an entity be thought of as the perpetrators of this wisdom. Through example, as well as through formally doing it in an academic setting which is what I as an individual can do. And it is essential for the preservation of these ideals that one periodically do things [formally teach at a Sundance [ceremony] according to ones ability. And certainly to keep the knowledge and ideals alive within ones family group.*



*As a family member I expected my family members, nieces and nephews, everybody to uphold these traditions, to do them well to lead descent lives.*

*I think an individual is compounded by his respect for the family wisdom and their teachings and the goals they establish for themselves.*

At this point in the interviewee observation and interview, it is clear that Ciye' knows the kind of information I am looking for and does not hesitate to share what is known to him. I sensed the relevancy of family and extended relationships had a special place in his experience. Ciye' seemed warm and appeared relaxed, there is affectionate intonations in his words. He begins,

*So the idea of living collectively has within it a great potency in terms of how one is socialized and how one relates to people. In just related to that, I see it is very, very important this begin at all. When a child is a baby it is passed around developing your relatives from aunties, to older sisters and cousins. They all help take care of the little ones. This is the way you learn of the family traditions because of the interplay and stories told by older siblings and cousins to younger ones, is advantageous. So eventually you become grounded in a place philosophically and intellectually, see? You are no longer, you aren't just a self but a part of something much bigger than you which comes from the group, from many people. And then you do the same when you reach a certain age, then you take care of the little ones.*



### Formal and informal teaching

When the word "education" appears, one is automatically lead to believe that an institution that provides that education will follow. Among Native people there has been formal education in the traditional teachings as well as informal teachings in the traditional setting, prior to the establishment of western educational institutions. In addition, within the western educational institutions there exists formal and informal teachings as well. It is my hope that through the formal and informal teachings of the traditional as well as the western educational practices that I will learn what was acquired in terms of knowledge about Native philosophical teachings. Ciye provides for the reader excellent examples.

Ciye' sat upright and crossed his legs, he began using his hand as part of his expression of communication. He states,

*I have always thought of ritual and ceremony as the most formal of all teaching and learning situations.*

*I think it is essential to share that, what one knows as a teacher either in a formal or informal situation.*

Ciye' looks directly at me as he gives depth to this topic,

*I have had an expanded... lengthy history of teaching Native people, and to some extent non-Native people as well. But more so as I say from 1969 to 1982 I was teaching principally Native people and that's formal teaching. In 1976, the people of one of the northern Lakota groups wanted to reinstate their Sundance, I was like 34 years old and fairly a young man. The people there had witnessed the*

*Sundance, so in the process I was sharing with them the kinds of things that I had learned from my own mentor, medicine man and he also came up to assist in the actual Sundance. But I was his assistant and through example by my family coming and by pitching camp and providing a feast and giveaways for the people before, during and after the Sundance was also a way of teaching them the traditional way of doing things, they understood them see? I felt that they had to see somebody doing it. And my family were always generous and gregarious about tipis and the beautiful encampment, two times during the Sundance they fed the entire encampment. So it is teaching and learning in both modes, the academic formal mode and the Lakota formal mode which is ceremony and ritual.*

*Then there were the informal, as I see in just learning in labs and what one does in daily life and in everything one does the minute one sits down with a group of people. We had monthly meetings in the community, it is a time when I would get up and explain the different parts of the Sundance. That's formal when you do it that way even though it takes place in an informal setting such as: a home, a basement, or a meeting hall. It becomes formal simply because of the type of information were talking about and how that is passed on. Now informal learning to me would be those who attend camp and observe another family doing things without saying anything. For example, participating in the feast, and giveaway and hearing the honor song just as a passive observer, just being there, now that is informally learning because nobody is standing there consciously telling you what's happening at every minute.*

### Description of Equay's Setting

Equay's story begins at a reservation community called Point. The nearest town to Point is Lake, a small concentration of houses and tribally operated agencies. Lake is located in the north-central part of the state of Minnesota and is named after the two large lakes found in that area. Lake can be found south of both lakes. In relationship to Lake the Point is located between the two large lakes where a peninsula stretches west into the water.

### Description of the Participant

#### Equay

Equay, is a traditional Anishnabe mother and grandmother. Although her western education is limited she is a mentor and leader among her own people. She was raised in an isolated fishing peninsula with her parents until her mother died. At that time she continued to live in her village with her father and one brother. She is a ceremonial leader and currently participates in women's rites.

#### Background Information

Equay is an Anishnabe word (also known as Ojibwe) meaning woman. I had the fortune to see Equay at several traditional pow-wows and gatherings, and was honored to be at one of her women's ceremonies as well. Prior to this meeting we did not know each other. It was through my own observations and admiration of her character that I sought her participation for this study.

I phoned Equay at home and explained the nature of this research. I could feel that she was honored by my request and agreed to participate. Immediately following, I sent her my cover story and the dates that I could come to Minnesota where she lived.

The interview took place in the late afternoon at a relative's house in a reservation border town. After having attended a meeting at the Women's Shelter located on the reservation, Equay arrived. In a back bedroom with the door shut, we sat on the floor on sleeping bags because we were both tired from a long pow-wow weekend. It was dark and gloomy outside after a rainstorm, the environment somehow contributed to the mood and the need to relax and slow down. Equay came from the meeting with her own cup of coffee, arranging her sitting position until she was comfortable.

Equay is a mother and grandmother as well as a traditional Anishnabe woman, and she speaks fluent Ojibwe. One can see that she is very healthy and looks well proportioned, her skin is dark from the sun. Equay wears her hair shoulder length; it is permed and salt and pepper in color. She wears glasses, no jewelry, no make-up and is dressed in blue cotton slacks, a t-shirt top with a vest and canvas tennis shoes. Equay radiates from within a beauty that is authentically Anishnabe.

After she has had time to read the interview guide she asks me to elaborate on some of the concepts that are mentioned. She decides that she will address only those things she is familiar with and chooses not to respond in any kind of order. Her voice had a reservation accent and humbled tone, and she speaks very timidly. We go through our introductions which is a form of Native etiquette in which people identify where they are from and who their parents are or were.

### Environmental/Geographical Identity

Identification with the lakes and how that geographical environment found at the Point in Minnesota was fundamental in the development of Anishnabe culture is described. Equay speaks of some of her experiences in relationship to the land and water found there.

*My dad provided for us, he was a hunter and fisherman. That's how we survived he was a hunter, he would ah... get that muskrat and he would bake it, he would get that duck and he would boil that, he took care of us you know?*

*Food was important to us but what we had we shared. I know we lived on the garden, wild life, and fish. As a young girl uh... I did haul water and stuff like that and hang nets, all of those things that I miss now in my life. Those were at the time, I thought, that was hard but today I looked at these were all the teachings that came with us. Hanging nets and you know to respect all the things that are on this earth even the spirits that are out in the wilderness. I know my dad he used to say when you want to kill something, the four leggeds you make sure you eat it, don't waste it.*

*I never went out ricing, my parents did that's how we had that wild rice to eat. It is very easy they say, one paddles [the canoe] and one knocks the rice. And they used to uh... and my dad used to smoke fish, and oh...(with cherished emphasis) I can't.... oh I can't find that fish around anymore- smoked fish. We lived on that and dried fish over the racks and bannock [bread] outside with the fire burning and the pan there. That was how we survived, it was fun hard work but it was good.*

Equay has described what she learned from her parents in terms of basic survival. Her identity like most Native people is grounded in the environment. Not only are survival skills important but how affection of the environment is taught from one generation to another.

### Cultural Influences

Equay's cultural influences are described primarily in the context that she experienced them however, to the reader it is not certain if her experiences with the dominant society were minimal or were limited. Equay speaks of her father,

*Those things were handed down here for us to use he would say. This way he would talk to us in Indian. That's why I know my Indian language and they [family] would always encourage us to use our language. But when you went to school we were laughed at because at times, you know?, I would use that language because those were the things that... my language was very important. In those days Indian language was always used and I'm thankful today that I never lost that language. So um... right now in my life I am a grandmother, a wife and uh... they call me a spiritual adviser.*

Equay also shares what was important to her mother,

*My ma passed away when I was thirteen and it's really hard when you lose a mother, more so than a dad, uh... I know I missed those stories what she used to tell us before going, putting us to bed. I don't hardly remember them but I know they, they were good stories, legends I guess they were called. Um... respect was another thing that she show... that she taught us. To always respect the*

*human beings on this earth, the people, the ones that crawl on the earth, water beings, all these beings. These are the things that help us, watch over us. So um... today at last I pass these on to my [children] and to who ever comes and asks for help, I share that with them. Because these are the ways Anishnabe people were given, were gifted. But I know that was the time for her [mother] to go. Anyway, my father- my dad, kept, raised us me and my brother.*

*And uh, she, both my parents helped a lot of people when I was growing up. I didn't know that, but today in life I met a lot of people that tell me oh, I knew your parents they were good helpers in the Indian way of life. They [the people] also told me that, like Dizzy's used to be a carrier of water [in ceremonies] she helped in that way so um... so I guess this is what is passed on to their children because today I am always asked to carry that water when I go to ceremonies.*

*Respect means a lot to me, it was, has, I guess because that respect that Anishnabe people carry all of the time. And how Anishnabe quay [women], how the people can [take] care of themselves is by um... there would be um... how to care for yourself even at home. You just take so much from the earth, whatever you need, you don't take more than you, you don't take more so it don't go to waste. Just take as much as you need to use on this earth, even the trees.*

*Nowadays the trees are being cut and its, it just is not good for the trees to go like that. They are put here to be respected like us. And the water, our fish is going too, and that is why because we are greedy sometime getting that fish. That's why*



*there are no fish in that lake. They are supposed to do some offerings and some people they do it and others they keep putting it off. But maybe they [the Anishnabe] don't know what they are supposed to do like I didn't when I was... well see, um... in those days, way back then they [the Anishnabe] weren't, they were forbidden to talk about their ways, you know? They were scared to show, to do these things. The Indian people, the Anishnabe people protected their knowledge and stuff like that, so they [the non-Indian] wouldn't come and you know? The non-Indian took away their, tried to take away their stuff.*

*I knew that ah... I guess I knew I've been recognized by many people for some time now that, as I'm an elder. And since I have been working in ah...[ceremonies] I think that has happened, I can't remember. But anyway, after I been in a medicine lodge that's when I, I, strong thinking that I am going to be an elder early, and I was kind of scared. It's a good feeling though that being recognized by an elder, that I am and elder at this age. I thought elders were supposed to be about sixty or seventy, but the elders recognized me and I am not that old.*

The reader can now see that there are similarities in philosophy and how individual distinctions are made by the tribe. Typically these distinctions are influenced by what knowledge that individual has acquired in relationship to that specific tribe.

I ask, "Can you tell me more about what you do remember about what you were taught growing up?" Equay responds with an emotional inflection in her voice, *Well we had to go like about a mile to go and help with the garden, it*

was hot [weather], my dad, my brother and I. That was fun to go and uh... work in the garden and eat the fresh food you know?, fresh carrots and all that corn. When I was young we used to be at the point swimming and having fun making our own games. Like there were no TV's we had kerosene lamps we had wood stoves. I miss the smell of the... my dad used to burn the grass and uh... that was a good smell. I was a good baseball player, the best in the point, aye. We used to make our own balls you know? Rag balls and then cut a piece of tree for a bat and made bases and gees that's how... 'cause we were poor we didn't have ah... once in a great, great while we would have candy. My grandpa used to come by and walk by and call us over and he would give us some candy. And very often, not very often we would come into town, and the main thing that we only went into town for is uh... is the certain things that we needed. Like I said we lived in wild life and our garden and that's why we weren't, a lot of people in those days never heard of illnesses like; sugar diabetes and cancers because these are the natural foods that we are eating that didn't get us sick.

And when I was growing up my parents, my ma, I barely remember, when she would say as a woman carry yourself good, wait until your old enough to have children, you wait. She always used to tell me to take care of myself you know?, as woman not to um... not to have more than one man.

Are there specific gender role practices, even today? I ask.

Equay answers, "oh yeah, when a woman were on their time, in those days, they had to build a little house for them and stay there for four days until their moon is

*over with. And nobody can go in there but a woman, and they can't have company and they have their own utensils. Somebody cooks for that woman and goes feeds her, the one that's in that house [little house]. Yeah, different ones still do that.*

What is the man's role in all of this I ask?

*They can't look at the lady, or they can't sleep with the lady until they are done. In those days there's different ones that go out to fast. My dad never talked about the fasting but uh... he must have 'cause he would be gone across the narrows, that's across the lake, for days and days. He would come back feeling good, he never talked about it and we never asked him. When we would ask something about the traditional ways from them, they would say, you listen when there's a memorial going on, you be quiet when there's a ceremony going on that's how you learn. But they would tell us what's right from wrong, you know? Like, 'don't be outside too long at night'. But nowadays, they let the kids out all night. That's how they... they don't respect their parents nowadays. Long time ago, when I was growing up we respect our parents. The parents today are not talking to their kids, they have to be talked to.*

Equay I ask, tell me about your dancing. She replies,

*I started dancing when I was about nine years old, my dad and them used to take us to pow-wows that's how I learned. When I first started dancing I danced traditional, that's when, after I sobered up, you know?, I was ashamed of myself before I sobered up. So I danced as a traditional person for maybe a year and then I had, I went to jingle dress and I've been dancing ever since. And that*

*um... I feel good dancing for the people in that pow-wow circle because I don't know who is helping that dress but I know somebody is [spirit].*

Equay rubs her ankle with her finger and looks away when she spoke of her jingle dress. I ask, could one say that the jingle dress is very sacred? She answers,

*Yeah, the jingle dress, especially Anishnabe only, Indian people. They wear that dress, that's helping that, they're helping that- the people-Indian people when they got that dress on, especially Anishnabe people- Indian people.*

She speaks very little about the roles of the male elders, so I ask, are there any local holy men? Equay hesitantly she replies,

*Not that I know of, now they [Anishnabe] go to Canada if they want to see someone. Most of them are dying off- the medicine people, it's very sad.*

Equay continues onto another subject,

*There is this one elder I talk to all of the time, she says, 'you know those kids are really getting awful around here. She said a long time ago when you gir... when you kids were very young, when you's were young, when you's were kids we never hardly had any trouble like break-ins or things like that, breaking in houses. Now the kids are making bombs out of toilet cleaners and stuff like that, she said. These drugs coming in right now are taking control of those kids, the people. That's what's doing that to them, that's why they are not respecting one another now and uh... I know why they are lost some of the parent's don't even be there for their children and talk to them, like they used to a long time ago. They must be worried but they just don't know how to control their kids. Like*

*most of the kids I help are hyper now, you know? I have noticed that's from the chemicals, maybe mothers drinking too much pop or whatever when they were carrying their babies. Because a long time ago, all we had was tea and the herbs that were there, there is a lot of people that knows about those herbs. I don't know what's on TV, they're lazy to go out and pick it or something. Sometimes I pick a lot so that I can share it with people that needs it. How they used to do a long time ago they shared, they shared. Like when a person walks in your house, share what you have, that's how we... Your life becomes better when you share that's how I was taught. It's hard for kids to um... do the right thing without supervision because there is a lot of, a lot of people are still using [chemicals].*

Equay appears to be thinking deeply, never pretending to have all of the answers, she says,

*Well, we have to pray hard, the Anishnabe have to pray hard. They have to offer that, what they offer, that tobacco to prevent things to happen that way. Prayers are strong. These Indian ways, Anishnabe got to continue to do those, like I said pray to keep and use these uh... traditions, the traditional ways. And then things will get better. We gotta tell them [the children] what little bit we know because we don't know it all. Only the Creator knows everything. I don't know a lot of things either, you would feel the same way I'm feeling I guess, sad for those, for the things that are hurting our people it's pretty sad.*

### Relationships

Without hesitation Equay begins,

*There was twelve of us in our family, we had a two room shack, a two room house and there was twelve of us raised in there. We were very poor but uh... we were strong in spiritual, in spiritual.*

*My ma passed away when I was thirteen and it's really hard when you lose a mother, more so than a dad, uh...*

*Um... my dad couldn't take care of us any longer because in those days no one did, where we lived. Anyway, and uh, so I, then I went on relocation those were the days, that was the time when the relocation was there for people who wanted it, I guess. But anyway, we moved away from home and leaving my dad, our dad. Like I said there were twelve of us in our family in that house that we grew up. It was very hard to live, to be crowded in there but anyway it was good because the closeness brought us even closer to each other. But nowadays people, nowadays in life people are separating from each other. I think that is why people are having a hard time too. My dad was born and raised on his reservation, my mother was from [a reserve] Ontario.*

Equay's has such a pleasant sounding voice, so smooth and gentle, it is reassuring and comforting to listen to, it does not have one hard tonal expression. We change topics a bit and to start her out I ask, "Do you teach these traditions to your children?" She enthusiastically and affectionately replies,

*I am a grandmother and a wife (she chuckles)... I got eight grandchildren, five boys and three girls and I got two daughters. And I pass these what little bit I know to them and they understand. It's hard to teach your children but uh... they*

*they talked to me in Indian. They always talked to me in Indian, but this is the best way I can translate it. As you um... you'll uh... in time, the Great Spirit will see that you earned that feather or that drum or whatever your going to be carrying. I could not help but to ask, were the pow-wows ceremonial at one time? Equay answers, "it was a ceremony and a social and ah... to have a good time, to play, to play there. That's the word that they use in Ojibwe, I don't know how to translate it; 'gumi new wat - to play', and also uh... ceremony. When I dance in a pow-wow circle I'm thankful for the sobriety. With Creator helping me with sobriety. I respect these ways, you know? That I am very protective over these, our ways, so the non-Indian won't take these, you know?*

You told me earlier that your dad was a well known singer, is this how you learned to sing and dance? Equay's eyes have a far away look, then she replies,

*Yeah my, I guess this is how we learned to sing and to dance 'cause he used to sing. He had this drum and he would sing and... at pow-wows. I was kind of ashamed because at the time I was kind of ashamed of my dad because he would go to pow-wows drunk, but not all of the time. You ah... learn, like so many people come to me and ask me if I could teach them these songs. And what I would tell them is uh... you have to go to ceremony and listen, because this is how you learn is listening. And those songs if your meant to learn them you will learn them because there is a way the Creator teaches us, and some get them from dreams, they are spiritual strong dreams.*



Like many Native people, Equay shows no remorse from having dropped out of school, she comments,

*I went to school in Point and then in Lake, and dropped out in Lake. I dropped out in eighth grade then went on relocation.*

I question farther, did your mom ever tell you if she went to school? Equay speaks,

*No, her never did.*

*Like I said a lot of people come to me and they want to learn themselves, they have to be there, to hear it you know? To take part in it to learn it to be there. And they can't only go there once, they got to go, keep going 'cause once you can't learn it- just once you've got to be there.*

We move back to the topic of education and what Native children should be taught. Equay responds,

*Get these teachings into the schools. I for myself, I have to say it depends who is teaching them. And if it's a non-Indian teaching them, you know they have their own ways. But maybe it would be good to have these things taught in those schools that's the way our young generation is going to learn. Maybe they can find ways to... you know, teach? That there is separate rooms for a Indian person to be teaching these, our children their ways.*

#### Description of Kossa's Setting

Maria is a small town where the inhabitants of rural Chacon receive their mail. In Maria you will find people of Spanish origin as well as indigenous people; their interactions seem on the surface separate and distinct. The atmosphere has a rural

appearance with clusters of adobe homes situated at the foothills of the Carson National Forest located at the southern end of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains. In Maria you will find small privately owned businesses such as small restaurants and stores, including a government post office. The county road 434 runs north and south and is a maintained two-lane highway.

Kossa and his wife live in Chacon, which is mid-way between their original communities, Santa Clara Pueblo and Taos Pueblo. This location is idealistic and practical when considering the literature of the four sacred mountains and its implications on Pueblo people. Even though they were not presently living in either Pueblo they had continuous direct contact there.

#### Description of Participant

##### Kossa

Kossa is a model of his own Tewa teachings, which is reflected in his work. He has done extensive work in social work and has taught at the university and continues to do consultant teaching at tribal colleges. One of his latest works is an educational kit featuring Native Americans of the southwest. At this time, he is an artist of the ancient tradition and can be found sculpting clay. Kossa is a connoisseur of Pueblo pottery and art work.

##### Background Information

Kossa is a Tewa (Pueblo) word meaning sacred clown. I have chosen this pseudo name because of the discussion and the importance of the clown society. This pseudo name in no way ties my interviewee in any fashion to that society. I learned of Kossa

through a colleague who suggested that I attend the Native American Philosophy Conference at Highlands University in Las Vegas, New Mexico. After it was established that I wanted to interview a Pueblo Native and attend the conference, one of the professors there gave me Kossa's name and number. In the process of the arrangements I agreed to present my view of Native American Philosophical Foundations in education. I also saw this as an opportune time to learn and become more reflective about the research I was doing. I was certain Kossa would be a keynote figure at the university and called him immediately. After my attempts to reach him by phone did not produce results, I wrote to him and sent him my cover story and monthly planner. To my surprise he mailed back a completed schedule and agreed to be interviewed at his present home.

It was July 17, 1996; two months after the correspondence was complete. I am sure we were a sight to see when we pulled up. Our car was loaded down and our little girl looked as if she had been sheep herding; her skirt was twisted and her hair looked as if she had not seen a comb in days. The beauty of the July weather in New Mexico, white clouds, rain and then warm sun made up for any sore appearances we may have brought.

The interview was conducted in the living room of Kossa's rural home, and the only other person at home was his wife. We shared introductions and they showed us their house and their artwork. Kossa did sculpturing with stone and clay, and his wife was a potter and worked on polishing pieces. According to Native etiquette, they offered us food, water and anything else we might want to make ourselves more comfortable. Kossa and I immediately set off to work on the interview which was conducted in the living room. He sat on the couch, and I sat on the floor. I needed to be able to stretch my legs as

well as man down the audio recorder and take notes, which made the room on the floor ideal. Kossa was very warm and open and pleasant to listen to; the atmosphere was serene and hospitable. His ability to communicate easily was enhanced by removing his glasses frequently and using his hands when he spoke; he also preferred eye to eye contact. Because the Tewa culture is very "we orientated", speaking in English involved the task of working with the word "we" in the thought process. For practical purposes, I have spelled the Tewa words that were used in the interview by the way they sounded to me.

Kossa was a tall man, with short hair, he wore a pair of shorts, a t-shirt, tennis shoes and a watch. He appeared to be healthy, and had a good-natured quality about him. One could see he was very comfortable and happy to be at home.

#### Environmental/Geographical Identity

Although each Native group of people in this country have different geographical communities (except in the case where several Native groups share the same land or reservation), the reader will find similarities in the way Native people relate to the land. All people in this country share preferences with geographical locations, but it is primarily the indigenous people who identify with the land more as a living thing due the same respect as any other living thing. The relationship to the land is a philosophical understanding as Kossa explains,

*The way I see it, and I see it in a long and healthy relationship way because we are not held responsible for destroying the earth because we respect the life of everything, we hold it sacred. In this life the earth is held for us to take care of, our philosophy is not destruction we don't have reverence for anything*

*destructive that would change our way of life. All Native people have that relationship with the earth, is first with the earth. And it is true with all tribes that the earth is our mother. We haven't just invented it, like our breath we can't live without it.*

In the next example Kossa goes into detail in order to explain the relevancy of the earth in relationship to the fulfillment of needs and teaching, and spirituality. Kossa begins,

*One day my brother called and I called him and went back to see my sister. I brought some clay home because I wanted to carve a lady and a pot because my mother always told me, 'carrying water was for the women'. And the word 'janyaghi', the Tewa word for carrying the pot from the village, janyaghi. So I went to her (my mother is about 80 years old now) and I asked her, zia tell me about janyaghi and her response was, 'what can I do to uh...' She stood up to wash dishes and think about it. And said, 'first of all we don't do that any more, and second of all your a man and men don't do that and third of all you have to do it in order to know. And it has much more meaning than I can explain to you', so... all summer long I had waited. I have a daughter who's twenty-six, I had put a pot on her head and a shawl around her and had her stand there, and told her janyaghi and how it would have been. I was waiting and doing all that I could in order for that light to come in- artistically, because poetically is how we understand some kinds of things, I was searching for how to do this. One day I had to carry a pot similar to the one I was doing [sculpturing]. I had to walk contemplating about the light and pottery and what I was doing. All of a sudden*

*the first thing I realized is that I had to visualize in my mind, from the top somewhere (he places his hands above his head) a line come straight down through my head through my feet and everything had to be straight. And I had to think to feel every time I took a step otherwise the balance would not be straight. And then I had to know where I'd stepped, been and where I was going because the ground was really uneven and it dropped off I tried not to move the water. And I had to do all this as I went and it demanded 100 percent concentration, okay? I was really effected by a vertical line and I was effected by a horizontal line at the same time okay? Because I had to know where I was coming from and where I was going. And then keeping that balance kept me conscious and concentrated and focused all of the time.*

Kossa had a lot of intonation in his speaking at this time.

*And then about half way through, all of a sudden a light came on and what my mother kept telling me, articulated, she said, 'that you have to do it, you have to experience it'. Uh... what she meant, there are parts of it I can't explain to you, she was telling me it is like life. You have to know where you are coming from and you have to know where you are going (and you have to concentrate) exactly from the time you were born, and so that told everything is focused in our being, you know? It emphasizes the importance of balance and harmony on this earth. The mother earth needs this and we need her and we have to recognize what we have. And then uh... I carved those pieces and they came out beautiful, and uh... those pieces I was very pleased with them they glowed and it was like it*

*evolved from what was , out of this one word janyaghi. It taught me that that's the way of the spirit, it's spiritual what I was doing.*

It is my hope that it becomes apparent to the reader, through Kossa's words, that the identification with land encompasses and interweaves many elements that effect and influence the life of Native peoples.

### Cultural Influences

It was my assertion that understanding the cultural influences among Native people would be instrumental in what was taught, and thus what needs to be taught. However, more attention must be given to what is not taught as public information and the respect for privacy must be given. Kossa elaborates,

*But the Pueblos sanction against giving away religious information and keep its secrecy from outsiders. In a physical and spiritual sense they won't understand the religious knowledge and then will try to pass it on. And I could see why the Pueblos societies are against a particular knowledge of society and are strict about this. Because knowledge is thought to have power, knowledge and wisdom are thought to be filled with power. And they certainly are because that is all we have in life is life and how we perceive it.*

Kossa's knowledge and sharing of gender is specific to the cultural influence of the Pueblo.

He states,

*And some have minute detail like even the... you know "itenica" how my sisters and I were being studied by gender. Pueblo people and gender is a cultural*



*thing, everything the trees, the flowers including ourselves and how even the language, well even intonation. For example; my sisters never talked about their sick time. Therefore quite clearly that belonged to the domain of the woman. No one ever stops them from saying sick, but women have many ways, multiple ways of saying sick time. Sick time is to get people... as we say in Indian "winanago bah" ah... sick. A nice definition because your talking about your state of grace. In the dominant society it means suffering for example, but it doesn't carry the load.*

Kossa continues,

*Ah... the material world is really gender and it's gendered rightfully, gender specific and it's a way of teaching. Especially religion [is taught gender specific] we didn't have a teacher like one person to teach it to start with. We perceived everything as male and female but uh... we had to walk that road so that our people would have a way of knowing where we came from. We shall pass, we shall pass being one because at different times we become more than ourselves we become a unified being, with both man and woman. We are supposed to acknowledge the human being, and uh... that's the way we see man, we are man and woman. And uh... we can say we are more than man and that I think comes from 'beyabeya lala' some people think that doesn't mean good, but it doesn't. It means one being, human being, but ah... I think the material structure was human so that normally led people to do that, be predisposed, than to become that way [both male and female].*

Kossa begins to discuss some of the influences of the dominant society and how that has affected the Pueblo people. Like most Native people the influence of other people from the dominant society and their realities have taken hold.

*As we mature we realize that we need to reflect it in our work, to ask that it is in the making- the process. The progress in society goes so fast, that to me, that some way it instills in you to know that we... that there is sacred time and that is leadership. And that we can slow it down and that making money isn't the most important in this world. The most important in this world are references which come out in common human beings as ideals that humanity has always strived for. It comes from being taught and being teachers. The primary fact is we are truly spiritual beings and America doesn't recognize it in any one of us. The longest church on Sunday is for one hour and it belongs to the priest and in turn the rabbi and it belongs to the institution. And as soon as we step out of there we turn on the TV and we watch a basketball game and we have forgotten all about the church and about spirituality. But spirituality has an essence like, that is, we breathe it every time we take a breath because without it we can't live. We [Native people] acknowledge that part, the American public does not know that the very essence of life is breathing. But we the Tewa people always did. Life begins that we are full of 'wah hah' which is our spirit. And we are this water-wind-breath, this spiritual being that, I mean this law is our constitution as spiritual beings. I think, I think this sacred law which is so vast in how it receives information that no matter what else we do, we don't have time for it. We need to stop and realize*

*that the very breath we take is what sustains us, that breath is connected to that 'teeyah' because that 'teeyah' is seen directly connected to that unfeel (and there is water there) and if you don't take care of that place that is displace. Your not going to, your not going to feel it if you don't take care of it. So um... I think to accept the responsibility we have to pass that conclusion onto further generations, and timeliness is essential.*

As this interview developed Kossa is compelled to share several of his perceptions,

*The American system separates church and state, the Pueblo way of life is very much similar to church and state it is not separate. The rules of the government and kinship is protected religion, the religion is spirituality and how you understand and were taught by it. It was always the way, and to be part of it was the idea. So teaching in that way is a very spiritual thing and I was taught in that way. And I was off at times because I didn't realize that then, but now I fully realize the truth in the fullest extent. It is the spirit of the human being that makes the paradoxical turn in the opposite way that we are going to know right and wrong over the years. If you are young and old, man and woman at the same time, right and wrong, good and evil at the same time, are opposites (Jung talked about this). You can only become a whole person by knowing the opposites of yourself, it is a spiritual thing.*

*At the last workshop I attended, we had to talk about spirituality with a lot of different people. At least where I come from you first have to understand you can only become a whole person if you understand you're a spiritual person or*

being, that is hard for any person to understand. Because it is the foundation of this tongue, some of it's important words that we talk about; (we lived a long time in the wilderness) when we were lost in the wilderness for a long period of time (in Tewa we say that) 'seeking life' is a heavy road. In Buddha, Buddha says life is suffering, but meaning life is a hard road to travel, they are similar philosophies. Then the goodness of the spirit how do we know that? Part of it, one is the way we know to pity, America doesn't know this because it's a long hard road and two, you must know honesty and only come to it by knowing your spiritual self. I am not saying that all American people can't, a lot of people respect us to receive it [indigenous knowledge] and we are preconditioned, but through maturity they have used our philosophy and are open to being.

Formerly, on this continent we were told, we were asked by the supernatural who live under the lake, are you a man, are you a woman? They [Tewa] said yes, I am a man and I am a woman. Then the second question they [the supernatural] gave them [Tewa] then will you treat all of them, your children, as, will you love them? Will you treat them in a way that natures them? Will you withhold your anger please, will you forgive? The word 'tinicacucat kin' says this. It has, is a heavy philosophically impregnated word and this is how teaching Creation begins.

There is no flash of lightening to say your fundamentally there, you know it happens in small increments. It doesn't lead down one dusty trail, but uh... I think you're on the road and this is why it is called seeking life. But uh... unless

*you view it in this way to come within yourself to calm them [your problems] and see of yourself as a spiritual being then your really going to be set up for chaos the rest of your life. Or be at the mercy of life, be at the mercy of money, be at the mercy of institutions and commercialization or something else other than being stable, centered within your self.*

*All religions, no matter what religion you are all people have developed religions. You have to had developed religion by hearing people with spirit, to make rhythm and reason, to make meaning out of the existing, you have to. But my premise is that no one religion is right or wrong and that there are commonalities in people's life and people's life way.*

An interesting observation is made here in reference to the influence of institutions, Kossa has suggested that Native people create their own type of institutions. Here are his examples:

*Every people that have ever lived upon this earth have developed institutions, so we know that people are institutional beings. We know we are sovereign and slaves at the same time, because we're sovereign we developed institutions, yet at a point in time we become slaves to that. We give them [institutions] the power to hold all of this power over us.*

*The Pueblos are a rule bound people, but they had developed an ingenious device uh? An ingenious way to undo this rule bound nature that we had which was to develop a clown society. Because the clown society ridiculed and was more powerful than any rule that was set. Therefore, you are allowed to*

*laugh at, you are allowed to ridicule it, you are allowed to make it less than what it is, as if to truly put things in perspective. If we were that in America society, had a clown society, I think that Richard Nixon would not have happened you know? And that Whitewater would not be happening right at the moment. Because all of humanity should be able to be ridiculed and somehow we understand that there's another side to it. Our ancestors say that this [clown society] is opposite, they say it in a different way or they say they did it in a different way, you know? They handled paradox from the beginning and they knew life was full of paradox and they developed a different structure totally irreplicable of all this [American society].*

Kossa and I were able to share his experiences of how culture of both societies have affected his life. However, it became apparent that the Native American's influence on the dominant society did not go both ways. Here the reader has the opportunity to hear how little influence Native people have on the dominant Euro-American society. Kossa shares,

*I'm always surprised at archeologists; I'm on the Native American Society Board for Archeological Security over at Mesa Verde in Cortez, Colorado. And when we go up there I am amazed at and amused that archeologists think that they know it all. They dig up, they dig up whatever they dig up and they give you solutions. But here we are Pueblo people descendants of those people who built those Pueblo structures and it never occurred to those people [archeologists] to ask us what's happened. Or if they ask us, they ask us with a sense that I know*

*this already but I would like to get your input and compare. But, it is not in a[that] sense that we know, we learn that we carry the myth [that] amount of knowledge that has been passed to us through cultural mythology, through language through various system structure that we developed, that our people developed over the centuries.*

### Relationships

Immediately when we think of relationships among Native people we think of family and extended family. It is interesting to note that Kossa speaks of the ancestors in the here and now and blends the past with the present. Kossa relates,

*It is these kinds of things [specific spiritual teachings] we pass on to our up-coming generations because my ancestors influence and presence in the southwest for the last 10,000 years maybe 8,000, they had a long time to think about it. This Tewa way of being was not too simple or not uncivilized either. As a matter of fact it is a very civilized way of being.*

Included in Kossa's statements about relationships is everything that lives, I sensed that he meant we are more than just related to each other, we are part of each other. He states,

*I have older and younger siblings, relatives that [say] yet, I am a spiritual being, no I am not a spiritual being I have this body it runs and holds me back. But I live where it's young [this is a spiritual interpretation] and I know that I am young and old that I am all of it [the creation] and yes everything is part of it the mountains, those that fly we are all part of it...*



Kossa now speaks of family,

*First of all, I come from a very large family I learned to live within this family and also extended family and beyond that. All of my relations interacted in some way and so you know it is very difficult to leave the family; I have learned a lot from them. I think the Pueblo's way and my particular family's way is a very compassionate way of being. There is also laws, authority, because there was the elders, the elders really was the boss in the sense of who was in charge of who was boss. They were I guess what you call it in Tewa 'netatete' the elders who always deserved respect and we learned in that way. I have great, high, values for family and Pueblo's for their loving and nurturing and being respectful. They [these qualities] come out and people sense them.*

#### Formal and Informal Education

It was surprising to find that most western educated Native people view formal and informal education as a process that involved first the Native tradition and then the western institution and then the combination of both. Kossa's distinctions from both begins:

*At this point in my life I think the most important thing that I have is a challenge to both-- in terms of teaching in the classroom and out of the classroom is modeling a lifestyle by the way I live it and also in terms of writing what I write. I write a journal every day and I write things that I remember and have come to understand. They are all relevant, believe it or not at this time they are spiritual. Anyway, what I think is the most important thing now is spiritual, about*

*using the sixth sense, gifted. Think about it because you [an adult] have almost passed values, you pass the acquisition stage, you pass trying to make money. You make them think out of it, (spiritual/sixth sense) folks like all of us. You ask the great spirit what is my personal goal mission here? How many years do I have left? What do I want to do with them? I think it is important what we do in the past for the up-coming generations. I knew that.*

Kossa continues speaking about what knowledge is acquired in the formal and informal processes of the tradition and the western educational worlds.

*I don't care how knowledgeable of life anybody is we don't know how to measure what intelligence really is. For example, my wife teaches special education and she comes home and I am in awe of how they [the school system] view intelligence and categorize these people as retarded, you know? Uh... then I think we are created as spiritual people. In some way or another, we are no more or no less than that person who is held back because that is our instruction, our Creator's way. That's because we have and should have respect for all life, and that which is true. And the people of prophecy [Tewa], I tend to go in that direction and uh... the knowledge of the people to uphold and protect ecology and reflect who and what we are. What is left for us to create as people is the direction we take for who we are. How we became who we are is a very philosophical way of being. There are times that I wish I was intelligent enough to change things, but I only accept who I am and I do accept that I am only a human being.*

*Nowadays, people become involved with family therapy as a result of loss of family structure. In the Tewa being, if you do something wrong you are corrected. You learn by watching, you learn by doing, you learn by modeling from the time you were born. The messages are restricted, and are non-verbal in Tewa so the breath is much larger in definition. Sometimes you got to research and travel to learn the soft part of people. You have to be there to hear and learn, like art is that way. To undergo slowly requires exquisite sensibility because something is with you, you have to be able to hear, to use the senses to learn.*

*My father, he was an example problem solver, he was a natural inventor of things. He was always thinking of a better way to do things and he taught himself how to do that. He structured his thinking so he was able to define a problem, and then defined the components of the problem, which is analysis, and he developed his method of how to take apart parts of the problem as he developed a sequence. My wife's father was a natural problem solver also. I think that it is inherent in us to be natural problem solvers, otherwise we would surely be lost. There are different cultures studying different views, different environments, different learning and recently they came up with this concept 'emotional intelligence'. Some people have always been very in-depth about learning emotional intelligence. My wife's father might be categorized as illiterate, but he knows how to attend to every social situation that he runs into and uh... he's very good uh... I think he is gifted. I think that's what they [society] probably call him. He also has potential to develop humor about all situations of*

*life. And he immediately and freely gives guidance and is able to keep it kindly about what has happened because in terms of other people, and that is emotional intelligence. And he uses it you know? He never learned it formally but has formalized it himself so it is a very pleasant way of being because I can never find humor in just anything, like the things he finds humorous. He is delightful and he is also very charming, you know?*

*Another thing that we need to do is value the culture that we come from this is of utmost importance. Because if we do not at this point in time realize the value of the teachings that have been left to us through the mythology and through the web, the whole web culture that we have inherited... It is steadily complex, daily I am befuddled by what my people have left me, that I am not going to understand it in my lifetime. And uh... certainly is not spoken in English, it is not written in dictionaries and it has not been on computers, yet.*

We both have sensed that we have covered as much of the philosophical topic that I presented as much as possible. We take deep breaths and allow for some reflection, Kossa then takes the initiative to draw our interview to a conclusion.

*To seek and learn who I am is what my culture told me in the first place you know? And these young people don't seem to understand this because these are the kinds of things we need to teach them that have value and that can be used to function in living the American way of life. Which will give them reverence not only to ritual and ceremony but to every breath we take. Then they don't have to go to church for one hour on Sundays and think they validated their spirituality to*

*uh... the highest God on top, in the sky or to it's representative, the rabbi or whoever it is. But, we too are God within ourselves and we don't realize that. How can society generalize us as a people?*

#### Description of Tah-ah's Setting

Tah-ah was living in Lawton, Oklahoma at the time of this interview. Lawton, can be found in the southwest part of the state of Oklahoma. Oklahoma City is the largest city closest to Lawton. The original Comanche land allotments were in the areas of (and not limited to) Lawton, Cache, and Fort Sill in Oklahoma. Some of the tribal configuration that made up this part of Indian country include: Comanche, Kiowa, and Fort Sill Apache.

Tah-ah has lived in and around the Lawton area most of her life, except during the times when she was off to school, work and later marriage. Before the passing of her husband, they moved back to Lawton and she has remained there ever since. There are no established reservations in Oklahoma however, there are tribal complexes that serve as tribal agency offices.

#### Description of Participant

##### Tah-ah

Tah-ah is a retired school teacher. She was the recipient of the National Indian Education Association award at the 26th annual convention in Tucson, Arizona in 1995. She is also the first recognized Native person to attend public school. Her mother and aunt attended the Carlisle Indian School in the late 1800's. She was raised speaking Comanche and recounts the changes in the Comanche world.

*To me wisdom is a God given part of our lives but we have to work at it to develop it. And if we don't develop it, we're not going to develop it, then we're going to become weak. And then we work at it, do things at, you know? Practical things and other things, then I think we develop it to a point where I think we are useful.*

*My grandmother was a medicine woman, this one here (she points to an oil painting) she had uh... she had Indian medicine and if somebody had a stroke she could heal them. She [grandmother] told my father's cousin, 'I'm old now, I won't live very long she said now I'm going to pick this peyote stuff. A man, a Jesus man came to see me and he told me that Christianity was the only, the only true way, all these others I come through. In the last, when she died she was a Christian and very devoted. And she [my aunt] said she [my grandmother] was very wise in the things she attempted to do and was doing. I lived with my grandma and uh... that was before my mother died. And we lived in ah... tent she was afraid of a frame house. And so she and I lived in a tent and we had a little, bitty tipi. I can still see that tipi in my mind. And she would, when a storm came, in Oklahoma storms are violent, dangerous high winds and thunder and lightening and she and I would go in that little tipi and would just sit in there secure. And my mother and father would go in a dig-out and uh... I learned a lot from her, I used to go and help her pick her medicines you know?*

*Tah-ah, what are your feelings on multicultural teachings, I ask? She answers,*

*My husband was Pomo, I am Comanche and my daughters were Kiowa-Apache, I am Baptist and my husband and girls were Catholic. But we never had a problem with that, respect, you know? If I had an idea I would teach it to them and then if I don't understand I'll listen or get teachings.*

#### Description of Asu's Setting

Denver, Colorado was the interview location for this particular participant. Although Asu's roots are that of Northern Mexico, she had been living in Denver with her youngest daughter since her husband was killed. Typically many Yaqui's as well as other indigenous Native people of Mexico came north to work in the mines and the railroads. Asu's husband was working for the Rio Grande Railroad when he died after being hit by a train. The accident occurred in Colorado which is why part of the family settled in this area after the accident. In the early 1900's Governor Yzabal of Sonora inaugurated a policy of deportation against the Yaqui's. Captives were sent to Yucatan to work on henequen plantations. Asu's mother did not make it to the Yucatan as she gave birth to Asu on March 12, 1905 enroute, at Puebla outside of Mexico City. The support and influence of the Maya at the Yucatan did not go unrecognized for this family, as they refer to the Maya as family. Furthermore, the majority of the Yaquis who did make it to the Yucatan during the deportation era never lived beyond that experience. The few who did were consumed with extreme hardship and suffering.



## Description of Participant

Asu

Asu spoke no English and had some of her children present to translate for her. She lives in a world protected by cultural isolation and revisited her own past through personal accounts and the accounts given by some of her children. Her wisdom is seen through the eyes of hardship and pride; it is the strength of her Yaqui identity and culture that she is able to share the values that directed her life. She has had no experience in western education and yet was a dominant force in the life of her family. Presently, at the age of 92 she is a mother, grandmother, great-grandmother and great-great-grandmother.

Background Information

Asu is a Yaqui word meaning grandmother. Asu is the oldest interview participant in this study, she was very cognizant of her role as an elder as well as the backbone of the family being interviewed. I did not know Asu prior to this interview but felt that since she and I were separated by over two generations that she would provide some of the data of older accounts that I was looking for. I contacted Asu's oldest daughter by phone to make arrangements for the interview. The oldest daughter assured me that Asu would be willing to be interviewed and asked if it would be alright for other members of the family to be present. I felt quite honored that there was this much interest in the work I was proposing to do and agreed to any additional support (triangulation) for this interview and observation. Little did I know that it was customary on this particular day for the family members to gather with their mother to share and give strength to each other for their daily lives and that of their children. Characteristically, special foods were prepared for the

Christmas holiday and family gatherings, it was such a treat for me to be able to share in the goodness of traditional food and the warmth and affection that goes into the preparation and sharing of such foods. This interview took place in Asu's house where she lived with her youngest daughter. We were all seated around the dining room table in a room right off from the kitchen where a very large stainless steel pot was steaming tamales. The atmosphere of the house was warm and authentically Yaqui. There was an excitement about this interview.

Asu was small in stature, had very little gray hair, did not wear glasses, or a hearing aid, and appeared very healthy. She was dark in complexion and did not look tired or worn, typical of many elders her age. Asu had the type of faultlessness found only in infants, small children and the very elderly. She was shy about being the center of focus and smiled when the attention was directed at her. One could see that her grown children were very protective of her and she lived in a type of cultural isolation which she preferred and had grown comfortable with.

Briefly stated, Yaqui's have been a very mobile people, as a result of the wars with the Spanish, Mexican and United States governments. Many people have remained in the original villages, while many have not. During a period of forced relocation many Yaqui's were transported to the Yucatan. The majority of those did not survive, and the very few who did have painful histories and have lived lives of hardship and suffering. The Mayan of the Yucatan also lived lives of exploitation and hardship; many Yaqui's are Maya in that sense. Obviously, the first language for Yaqui's is Yaqui; the second language is Spanish with its own unique dialect; and lastly, there is English. One of the key features of this

interview was that whenever something was said that needed further questioning or explanation, a family member always stepped in to provide a thorough translation.

Western education was not attainable for many people of Mexican ancestry because there was not a forced drive to round these people up and put them in boarding schools, as was typical of the northern indigenous people. The Yaqui and other Mexican tribal people have a history that is uniquely their own. For these reasons this participant was not educated in the western sense, however, it appeared that some of her children were.

I took it upon myself to read the interview guide to the family who were present and explained that they were free to answer the questions in any way that they were comfortable with.

Asu began by introducing herself and giving her four names, as customary the women always kept their mother's last name and added their married name on. She states, "I was born on March 12, 1905. We didn't have a choice how we raised our children we were worried to just survive."

#### Environmental/Geographical Identity

Asu's perception was similar to Tah-ah's perception about the land and environmental identity and grew up believing that was all there was. About Asu, she said,

*I am overwhelmed by the dominant society in this country. When I look at them I can't help but to wonder who they are and where their families come from. I cannot understand how any human being could leave their roots, and native countries to come and live among so much turmoil.*

### Cultural Influences

As the focus of this discussion opened up Asu's eldest son Rain feels compelled to speak about some of the influences on his life. Rain says,

*The only thing I remember when I was growing up was, you's [the people including himself] were the trouble makers. I remember we used to go steal coal during the Depression just to stay warm, we threw it in the back. There are a lot of things I can remember but I better not say.*

Asu now gives her oldest daughter Easter a look of approval as to speak in English on her behalf. Easter begins:

*When we were brought up they [the adults, parents] were really hard as nails. They weren't going to hurt you but they gave you a lot of discipline, there was a lot of respect. They had us working since we were ten years old, we worked first at home, I started making tortillas at the age of seven. Then after we graduated from cooking then we went to work in the fields. He [the youngest brother, Maso] was a mess-up, he wouldn't let my mom change him so I had to come from work. To tell you the truth I had to raise all of these kids because I was the oldest girl in the family. There were eight kids all together, and one adopted. We used to live out on a farm and living out there on the farm we used to go to school during the winter and work all summer long from early in the morning until late at night.*

With heavy emphasis, Easter begins speaking again,

*There was no smoking and drinking--none of that stuff you could do. And of course we didn't care, we didn't want to do it anyway. But you know, they had you pretty well trained. You know, they were pretty, they were... but I thought it was, when you're young you think your parents are real mean, you know real hateful, you even want to leave home and everything. But now that you're older, you think about it and you say, now I'm glad I was brought up that way because who knows what you would of turned to be. Yeah, (she reflects openly) that's the problem with this younger generation. Like the parents like us we were brought up real strict so then we wanted to bring up our kids the same way. Well, not as bad you know? But half way like it, and now they bring up their kids the same way and it goes down the line. And a lot of them don't want to discipline their kids at all they just let them run. My grandma used to say, 'you don't want your kids, you shouldn't of, you don't like them you let them run like animals'.*

I explain and ask, because of the present day stereotype, about anyone who vaguely fits the description of being Hispanic. Are you aware that they have been easily identified as being gang members? Do you think gangs are part of the contemporary culture specifically tied to indigenous Mexican people? Maso responds:

*I think that it is just something happening. It's just a click because one person does it then so does everybody else. I don't think it is part of the family; it can't be even though there is some going on in the family. Just like they have on the news now that they [the dominant society] don't know what to do about the drugs. They say there are more kids now smoking marijuana than anything else.*

*because their parents did it. And they know their parents did it because the parents told them.*

The younger sister Heart has more to say:

*But you know when you call the parents what do they tell you? You mind your own god damn business, you bitch, they are my kids. That's why the kid will turn around and tell you, see I told you to go ahead and call my mother.*

It becomes obvious at this point in the interview that the influence of the dominant society in relationship to the Yaqui culture has some real differences regarding respect and discipline, including the use and misuse of abuse. Maso now adds,

*This is different, abusing is when you really hurt a child. A spanking is a spanking. But that is what I am saying, abuse is abuse. They say there is no control for these kids nowadays but it is the people up in the higher offices that have got to be controlling it. Because they are the ones who take the right away from disciplining the kids the way your supposed to. And then there are a lot of these kids, where you see them get hit or shot in a gang or something. Oh- my baby, my hito's not that kind of a person and that, oh- my poor baby he's not that kind of a guy. Well then what's he doing out there then? If he's not that kind of a person. They [the parents] back their kids up one hundred percent because they don't know what they're doing, and if they know they just don't care until something happens to them.*

Now back to Easter the older sister:

*While your kids are at home they are the nicest kids. But once they walk out that door, you don't know what they are going to do. You can't say they are the nicest kids that you have because when they are out there they are a different person.*

Heart speaks again,

*We lived our culture that was all we knew, and they knew when I said something I meant it, I wasn't going to back down on them. And everyone used to say well you brought them up like your mother brought you up, and I say that is living respect.*

The conversation did not end here, but information regarding the spiritual, and traditional upbringing in regards to the culture were not taped at the request of the participants. Most of the people involved in the four previous interviews, always spoke of how life was in the past. And how past and present have created a cultural separation, in varying ways. Cultural changes are inevitable, however Asu's reality stayed the same. Asu's family never designated a period of time where they were ever separated from their cultural practice, their concept of time was never addressed "as in the past."

### Relationships

Family and extended family is always an easy topic to address among Native people. I take the initiative by asking the first question. I ask Easter to tell us about her own grandchildren. Easter begins,

*Well I can't really say because I don't see them that often but uh... but they, they are pretty well respectable and uh... they go along with what the*



*parents tell them and they haven't had any problems so far, you never know.*

*When we lived at home, boy... you had to have a lot of respect. When people get together to talk like we are now, children was not allowed in there to listen to any of your conversation. You had to go to your room and all they [the elders] had to do was look at you, they would go like this [her eyes signaled the direction] and you move out, they wouldn't even tell you. Now everybody sits around and they all conversate with you, everybody has to know what your saying and everything. Not then, there sure is a lot of change, a lot of change.*

Heart adds her bit of experience,

*Ask my mother, my mother would not interfere when I was disciplining my kids. My husband would not interfere when I was disciplining my kids. I have lived here all the time with my mother and my kids but my mother never told me anything how to discipline them boys.*

#### Formal and Informal Education

Formal and informal education for most people not only includes what is being taught and what is acquired as information but also what is heard and seen by other people's examples. For the most part, Native people have a way of teaching indirectly this is where the use of examples is important.

Heart begins by speaking:

*She [Asu] did all of the disciplining because my dad didn't believe in spanking, but she did, she used to be the enforcer. My dad taught by example, one time we got company and all we had was a small watermelon. So my mother cut it*

*up into small pieces and she gave it to everybody. But Santi [one of her older brothers] didn't want a small piece he wanted it all. So my dad said okay. Later on when the company left my dad went and bought a watermelon and brought it home and made him [Santi] eat it all. And that's why to this day Santi don't eat watermelons.*

Maso began speaking about his own children:

*We got to remember that I was in a position where we would get disciplined and that discipline got carried over to them [his son and daughter]. I mean it wasn't as harsh as ours was but it was still there. And, you know, because I understand, I wanted to go out but I couldn't, but I understood the limitations of what I could do, the times I could go and the times I could come back. We [he and his wife] tried putting them limitations on them [their children] too. You don't let them [your children] get above you, you don't let them control you is what I am saying. What's really nice, you know what's really nice that we can say about our whole family is my brothers and sisters and everybody is, that none of us hardly ever know what the inside of juvenile hall looks like. The only one that I can say, the only one that I know that did go to juvenile hall and I remember, when I was small, maybe eight or nine is when Santi got in trouble. And he got cut on the arm right here [he points to his own arm] at a dance and they took him to juvenile hall. Santi called and told them [his parents] if they could come and get him out and he [my dad] said huh-uh. My mom didn't want him to spend the night there but my dad said your going to stay there, I told you never to call me if you ever*

*got in trouble. But we went and got him the next day and my dad got him out but when he got home, my dad took him in the garage and oh-my-goodness.*

Heart picks up the momentum,

*You know I have always said that the discipline comes from the parents. If the parents don't have no discipline with the kids when they are small the aint going to do nothing.*

Maso now adds,

*What everybody has to do is use reverse psychology. Edge them [the kids] on to do things they're not supposed to do. And then when they get caught just let them pay the consequences. I really mean that, that's the only way they are going to figure out what they're going to have to do later on. I also remember when we were younger, not only could my mother and father discipline but the neighbors. You know, the people you hang around with? Let's say my friend's dad, if he caught us doing something he would not only punish his son he would punish me too. And my mom and dad wouldn't say nothing, as a matter of fact I would get it again from them. Because what was good for one was good for everyone, see? That's the way they ran things.*

Maso continues enthusiastically about this topic and the lack of control parents have on their kids and he can't help but to add,

*That's what I tell these guys, you go to a grocery store or somewhere and see a little kid that wants something and you tell them no-no-no; you tell them to put it away. And they start having a fit, kicking and fighting, and yet they win.*

*You go ahead and buy it for them to keep them quiet. Except you're not keeping them quiet, is what your doing is giving them the right when they are 12-13 to knock the crap out of you. Because they are going to control your life, they control you already when they are five years old. That's why you take them outside to the car and spank them, spank them on the bottom.*

### Summary

In Chapter III, I told the story of each of the five Native participants in this study as they experienced what was learned and acquired in knowledge concerning their distinct philosophical backgrounds. The stories were told through a narrative description, supported by direct quotes of personal interactions observed in the home settings and communities, and by notations from my field notes and travel journal entries. Each story provided information on the participants setting, background, environmental/geographical identity, cultural influences, relationships and formal and informal education.

The five Native elders who participated in this study were Ciye', Equay, Kossa, Tah-ah and Asu. I will summarize each elder's story before introducing the major themes and providing a discussion on each theme in reference to the literature in Chapter IV.

Ciye' came to be recognized as an elder among the Lakota people after he received extensive formal teachings in the Lakota tradition from an Oglala medicine man. His family supported his teachings as an elder and a perpetuator of wisdom. Ciye' also had extensive education in the western educational system. I believe his degrees in interpretive religion and Native Art contributed in a complimentary way to his presentation as an elder.

Ciye' is an example of the importance of the survival of Lakota tradition, as his mentor/medicine man had passed away several years prior to this interview.

Equay received her recognition and respect as an elder due to the common knowledge among her people that she had in fact lived that life. Equay learned first hand what was needed to perpetuate Ojibwe tradition from her parents. She has totally accepted her role as an elder and helps women learn what is necessary in the formal ceremonial tradition of the Ojibwe.

Kossa was born into a highly structured society where what is learned and what is acquired in terms of philosophical tradition is an everyday event. Kossa first accepts the fact that he is human and secondly that he is a carrier of his own Santa Clara tradition.

Tah-ah comes into her knowing from living a life as a Comanche women. Throughout her life she had experienced many forms of education and what was necessary to acquire the skills to become a productive elder and teacher of knowledge. Although there was a lot of sufferance in her life, she overcame the worst through her education.

Asu, because she was the eldest of the participants had a more tragic story. She became an elder out of life experience and that of a woman being born into the Yaqui culture during a painful time in Yaqui history. Asu had no formal or informal education in the western sense, however, she has been a great teacher and elder in her family and community.

#### CHAPTER IV

#### THEMES AND DISCUSSION IN RELATIONSHIP

#### TO THE LITERATURE

Included in this chapter are the four major themes of the study, the data supporting each theme, followed by a discussion of the literature related to each theme. It would be important to note here that much of the interview discussion might be more authentic and in-depth than some outside literature. The themes and patterns were discovered through an analysis of the data presented in Chapter III. That data consisted of each participant's in-depth interview and observations of their environment. Indigenous Nation hoods were identified and geographic and cultural distinctions. This feature was necessary to tie the similarities to a philosophical structure. The major themes were derived from the multiple categories that converged as a result to studying and rereading, and sorting and coding. To avoid my own interjections, I have presented each theme the way it was presented to me either singularly or combined, to preserve its originality, essence and its unique character.

Initially six major categories were identified: Philosophy, Mythology, Family, Communication, Assimilation and Education. As the six major categories were studied, only four major themes emerged related to what knowledge was found regarding various

Native philosophical teachings. Subsequently, the following four patterns or themes were developed:

1. Respect encompassed philosophy, world view, cultural identity, ceremony and ritual, logic, quest/seek knowledge, wisdom, environment and origin, was the foundation for establishing any specific type of information and awareness.

2. Spirituality was interwoven in the mythology, metaphysiology, dreams, cosmology, legends, oral narratives, and story telling, and was called cultural principle.

3. The participants profess that family has always included the extended family, Sociological implications, ethnicity and gender and has affected Native philosophies as well.

4. The participants stated that education encompassed traditional Native Education, contemporary Education. Aassimilation, communication, justice, economy, and religion have also been some powerful agents in influencing the world views and personal philosophies among Native people.

Theme One: The Concept of Respect is Referred to and is Applied to Everyday Living and Lifeways. It is so Highly Revered Among the Participants that They Believe That No Kind of Learning or Teaching Could go on Without It

At the onset of each interview the participant was asked to define wisdom in relationship to the interview guide (see Appendix C). The following responses were taken directly from each participant. Keep in mind that most of the interviewees did not follow a linear sequence in response to the questionnaire. They deviated from the guide to answer only those questions that they felt responsible for answering. For the convenience of this



study I have reflectively combined similar discussions that pertain to each theme. The word and meaning of respect was referred to throughout this theme and affected each response.

Respect meant something different to each participant and each had varying levels of respect for different aspects of their lives. Respect pertaining to traditional teachings were highly regarded by each participant. However, these teachings were unique to each nation.

*Ciye': Wisdom, I think it is understanding and knowing the structure of ceremonies and ritual. Many times inherent, in the making of cultural objects there are specific ideals and values expositied. Not only the making of things but also the knowledge of such things, herbs, plants and how to prepare those kinds of things that are gathered. The reading of the environment in terms of seasonal changes and being able to as it were, predict the weather... The old knowledge of hunting and tracking and obtaining, killing food from nature required a particular skill and that too is a form of wisdom. Then I think in modern times as we move from those levels, I think one of the most remarkable forms of wisdom is learning to read and adapt oneself to the other, meaning non-Indian forces. Wisdom is a collective term encompassing all of these other forms of knowing. Just to know the mythology is important but wisdom consists of the practical as well as the theoretical.*

*The whole perception of the quest, the search, the vision quest searching to understand, I think after so much learning and teaching and experiencing one*

*is able to come to certain conclusions about what was significant about this life we are living.*

*But my assumption, my stereotype, is that among Native people religion, philosophy and these kinds of things have always been respected, the grandpa's the holy men, uh?*

*I think another dimension is the result of this confluence of cultures, it is the idea developing a personal world view that incorporates both the traditional perspective and the reasons why we do things in the traditional setting with those modes of ethics and understanding of laws and morals from the non-Indian world.*

Ciye' teaches that cultural Native skills come from the wisdom and knowledge that were passed down. This knowledge has endured because of the respect Native people have for these teachings. The vision quest was an important tool for acquiring self respect and control. The development of world view or philosophy requires respect for Native and non-Native teachings.

*Equay: I know we lived on the garden, wild life and fish. I looked at these were all the teachings that came with us. Hanging nets and you know to respect all the things that are on this earth even the spirits...*

*I know my dad used to say when you kill something, the four legged you make sure you eat it, don't waste it. Those things were handed down for us to use he would say. This way he would talk to us in Indian.*

*...in time, the Great Spirit will see that you earned that feather or that drum whatever your going to be carrying.*

*I know why they [the kids] are lost some of the parents don't even be there for their children and talk to them, like they used to a long time ago.*

For Equay respect has and did go beyond the self in these examples, it included respect for the land, food, spirits, and ceremonial finery. In some instances, lack of respect such as neglect is evident in lack of identity.

*Kossa: Because knowledge is thought to have power...*

*...because I hold this language and this code and this culture in my head it behooves me to reflect and think about the meaning of all these words.*

*The most important in this world are references which come out in common human beings, as ideals, that humanity has always strived for.*

*We need to stop and realize that the very breath we take is what sustains us, that breath is connected to that teeyah because that teeyah is seen directly connected to that unfeel [spiritual sense] and there is water there, ( in the air) if you don't take care of that place that is displace.*

*In this life the earth is held for us to take care of, philosophy is not destruction we don't have reverence [respect] for anything destructive, that would change our way of life.*

*And it is true with all tribes that the earth is our mother.*

*I think that we as an indigenous are a mystery and we can't develop a philosophy because we are in the process...*

Kossa has expressed how knowledge, language, ideals, spirit, air, land and mystery must be respected in order to understand their deeper meaning.

*Tah-ah: To me wisdom is a God given part of our lives but we have to work at it to develop it. Practical things and other things, then I think we develop it to a point where I think we are useful.*

*My grandmother was a medicine woman... she had Indian medicine and if somebody had a stroke she could heal them.*

*I am careful as to what I do, what I say, where I go. To me that is the most important thing.*

Tah-ah expressed how self respect promotes careful behavior and that knowledge and wisdom develops and healing occurs.

*Asu: This participant did not speak English and did not address philosophy, culture, or wisdom as a reality separate from the one she was living. Every form of communication was done as it was customarily practiced. Asu's children provided many revealing triangulation opportunities.*

*Easter, Asu's oldest daughter: They [parents] weren't going to hurt you but they gave you a lot of discipline, there was a lot of respect.*

*Heart, Asu's youngest daughter: ...we lived our culture that was all we knew...*

*And everyone used to say, well, you brought them up [her children] like your mother brought you up, and I say; that is living respect.*

It is interesting to note that Asu's family spoke of respect as a tangible cultural quality that was expected as much as it was taught.

Discussion: Theme One

This collection of indigenous oral philosophies was attributed to the way the speakers recounted his or her knowledge and world view that was influenced by respect. The problem with the concept of world view is that too often we accept that it means we all stand on the same world and view it differently, when in fact, what we should learn from this phrase is that there may, indeed be fundamentally different worlds to view (O'Meara & West, 1996, p.2). It has been my experience in working with the participants that the depth and drama of indigenous experience and their consequent oral expositions do not make sense in writing the same way they make sense in speech. During the interviews, the participants used body language-gestures, facial expressions, intonations, physical emotions and created an atmosphere that would touch the senses void of words. It has been my attempt to explain to the reader what was meant beyond the written word.

Let us consider the practical differences of world view among indigenous and Euro- Americans, simply to investigate how these differences were molded will show how they were unparalleled. Fixico, (1993) elaborates:

The global configuration of land and water created two separated hemispheres over time--- a kind of hemispheric polarization. The distance from Europe to America across the Atlantic Ocean is approximately three thousand miles. The European and Native demographics fundamentally represented geographic differences in global hemispheric terms. As the human populations grew in isolated halves, each society evolved a world view as if the other hemisphere did not exist. In a sense, these hemispheric

differences set up two separate human evolutions and permitted a hemispheric polarization of peoples, civilizations and world views. Between such diverse societies, communication has proved to be difficult.

Because of the variety of geographic areas, environments, climates, and world views, Native American groups developed in distinct physical and cultural ways and at different rates. Each group established an identity of its own.

Life was and is complex, full knowledge, unpredictable; the people must wait for the truth to be revealed. Native people learned to observe nature at work and regard its actions as lessons for survival. Wisdom came with patience. With so much to learn, the native mind functioned more effectively as a receiver of knowledge from nature, rather than as an investigator of nature (p.24).

The differences in the development of cultures among Native Americans and Euro-Americans provides a deeper explanation of why there are differences in regard to what is respected among Natives and respected among Natives and Euro-Americans. The relationship that most Native people have with the land and nature, mold their values. These values are, for the most part, different than the values of that of the Euro-Americans. Fixico (1993) continues,

The American Indian tribal world view really represents a complex combination of the physical reality (which Columbus viewed) and the metaphysical reality. In order to begin to understand such a dual reality

in Native American philosophy, the non-Indian must develop an accurate perception over a long period of time. Unfortunately, Euro-Americans have yet to exhibit the patience needed to completely understand Native Americans at all levels of their culture (p. 27).

It has been my experience as an educator, that the Euro-Americans have begun to develop a perplexing (and sometimes painful), perception of the Native people. I believe the patience to understand is forthcoming (more out of need than want, for some). As we begin to address environmental genocide and how that effects all life. How we come together as Native and Euro-American people will influence our effectiveness in presenting respect as a quality that effects our lives and teaching.

Momaday, a Kiowa writer and teacher, describes the necessary relationship[of man and land] as an act of reciprocal approbation.

Approbations in which man invests himself in the landscape, and at the same time incorporates the landscape into his own most fundamental experience. The respect and approval is two-way: humans both give and receive value and self worth from the natural world. According to Momaday, this act of approbation is an act of imagination, and it is a moral act. All of us are what we imagine ourselves to be, and the Native Americans imagine themselves specifically in terms of relationships with the physical world, among other things. Native Americans have been determining themselves in their imagination for many generations, and in the process, the landscape has become



part of a particular reality. In a sense, for the Native American, the process is more intuitive and evolutionary than is the white Western rational linear process. The Native American has a personal investment in vision and imagination as a reality, or as part of a reality, whereas many whites believe such things have very little to do with what we call reality (Booth & Jacobs, 1990, p. 38-39).

Native educators have only begun to develop philosophy in Native American education. In light of this we can say that tradition can, and often does, grow and attain increased ideological power with progress, becoming entwined yet remaining distinct. White (1959), Steward (1955), and Service (1962) all have argued that if we are to explain the evolutionary process of culture change, it must be through comparative research that attempts to account for similarities and differences in societies that exhibit similar technologies but inhabit dissimilar environments (also see Bettinger 1991; Gasco 1984; Jochim 1981; Johnson and Earle 1987; Thomas 1981). "A better understanding of why some societies were more readily colonized than others would provide important insights into human adaption and cultural evolution" (Larson, Johnson & Michaelson, 1994, p. 265). It is crucial that Native people begin to understand how they were and are effected in the colonialization process. If respect for self, and others, and life in general is to become of utmost importance, than Native people need to accept who they are in the here and now.

When the participants considered the multi dimensional aspects of the indigenous mind and senses they also remembered that for the indigenous people there was a simple and practicality to this existence. Fixico, (1993) goes on to say:

American Indians are practical people who stress the importance of basic needs. During the early years of Indian-white relations, essential needs governed their lives and influenced cultural development. Practicality within this context shaped their thinking and philosophies about the world, life and death.

Native Americans existed in America as long as 35,000 years ago or more. Thus their cultural, social, and physical characteristics developed over thousands of years. Well before the arrival of Columbus, Native American tribal communities had evolved, changed, and developed separate group identities throughout the Americas. It would seem logical, then, that thousands, or at least hundreds, of years or more would be required to alter them further ( p.19).

Most interesting, was the sense that Kossa and Asu still lived in a world (reality) that reflected their specific indigenous teachings and spoke only in that mind frame regardless of the changes of the world around them. The discussion regarding respect in relationship to wisdom (world view) among the participants obviously meant something different to each person. It is here in the mind, over a period of thousands of years that respect for Native world view has developed. The literature also suggests an

encompassing ideal of respect in the world view of Native people. Booth and Jacobs (1990) discuss:

According to Nelson, the Alaskan Koyukon sense that the world they live in is a world full of aware, sensate, personified, feeling beings, who can be offended and who at all times must be treated with the proper respect. The animals with which the Koyukons interact are among these powerful, watchful beings. Legend states that they once were human, becoming animals when they died. Animals and humans are distinct beings, their souls being quite different, but the animals are powerful beings in their own right. They are not offended at being killed for use, but killing must be done humanely, and there should be no suggestion of waste. Nor can the body be mistreated: it must be shown respect according to any number of taboos. Consequently a complex collection of rules, respectful activities, and taboos surround everyday life and assist humans in remaining within the moral code that binds all life (p.37).

As Peter Mathiessen suggests:

...the whole universe is sacred, man is a whole universe, and the religious ceremony of life itself, the miraculous common acts of every day. Respect for nature is respect for oneself; to revere it is self-respecting, since man and nature though not the same thing, are not different ( p.40).

These ideals may in fact play a part in why some Native people have given into the many social ills that prevail. The powerlessness that is experienced when the land and the sacred teachings are neglected and disrespected may have effected Native people in a negative way. It sends a message that Native values are not important, and thus Native people are not important. Undoubtly, the natural environment and the many powerful forces of nature shaped the intellect and philosophies of Native Americans Fixico, (1993) adds:

Nature obviously represented a higher authority than people. In their native logic, in their oral traditions of creation, a "Great Force" created animals and people; thus the people believed themselves to be created from nature.

Among Indians, social relations played a crucial role in comprehending life and advancing thought. Indians did not perceive themselves as above plants and animals but equal to or below them. They respected spiritual power of each living thing and acknowledged sacred items and places. On a daily basis, plants and animals played pertinent roles, providing balance and order in the lives of the Native people. Their philosophical view that plants and animals possessed equal status with humans precluded any serious notion of exploiting nature (p. 20).

If nature shaped Native intellect, and nature is exploited than Native intellect must not be understood and remains undermined. Sprott, a nursing and anthropology consultant

in private practice in Anchorage, found other aspects in which environmental identity played a role. She stipulates:

Obtaining subsistence-type foods such as fish or meat (moose, whale, caribou) either through one's own efforts or through relatives in rural Alaska was mentioned by half of the parents [she interviewed]. Several spoke of the importance of subsistence in association with a belief in the spiritual forces of nature, consistent with Wenzel's (1991) account of traditional ideology about arctic ecology. (Spratt 1994, p. 317).

The deeper and more profound message here is that the spiritual force that is found in the food is taken in when it is eaten. Thus, the consumer is blessed with this spiritual force. I believe this message has an even greater message as some of these foods become extinct. Which gets back to one of the basic teaching of why food should not be wasted and should be respected at all costs. Certain foods are a cultural influence and become preferred, and thus provide comfort among those who share a similar identity. These foods and influences will change as their availability changes in the natural environment. Respect is present either consciously or subconsciously in every lifeway among most people.

Theme Two: Spirituality is a Cultural Principle That Permeates Every  
Aspect of Native Life as Taught to the Participants by Their  
Relatives and Ancestors

Spirituality is a rich expression and interpretation of the inner self shaped by culture and beliefs. Ancient spiritual symbolism and representation that is otherwise hard

to express comes alive in ceremony, ritual, mythology, metaphysiology, dreams, cosmology, legends, oral narratives, and storytelling.

*Ciye': ... advise younger people about the dangers and fallacies...*

*Sometimes that can be taught through storytelling. ... knowing the mythology, the body and wisdom of knowledge of the origins of the earth, of the things on it, of the people themselves, of the origins of the ceremonies how they came into being. Many times as we grow in understanding we can read these stories and see the implicit and explicit message. As young people we listen to them simply as entertainment just because they are funny, but as we grow and mature in our intellectuality we are able to see the deeper and more profound [spiritual] meanings of the behaviors that are exhibited in those legends.*

*... by acknowledging the significance of dreams, not just any common dream... And there is that term--dream is also applied to many times in our language, to people who are wide awake. Sensation and an unusual phenomenon occurs that becomes incorporated into their psyche.*

*... the ultimate message is that yes God was speaking to these people through the White Buffalo Calf Maiden...*

Ciye' not only understands the significance and power of mythology, storytelling, legends, and dreams, he appreciates their teachings as a scholar of interpretive religions. Spirituality is a creative expression and is unique to each individual and culture.

*Equay: We were very poor but we were strong in spiritual.*

*The non-Indian took away their, tried to take away their stuff  
[spirituality].*

*...I know I missed those stories what she used to tell us before  
going, putting us to bed. I don't hardly remember them but I know they,  
they were good stories, legends I guess they were called.*

*And those songs if you're meant to learn them you will learn them because  
there is a way the Creator teaches us and some get them from dreams,  
they are spiritual strong dreams.*

For Equay having spiritual strength was admired more than having material wealth, as for most Native people. It is one of the last remaining resources that Native people have. There were many ways in which to become spiritually alive, stories and dreams continue to have great importance in these teachings.

*Kossa: I think the most important thing now is spiritual...*

*Formerly, on this continent we were told, we were asked by the  
supernatural who live under the lake, are you a man, are you a woman?  
They [the Tewa men] said yes, I am man and I am woman. Then the second  
question they [the supernatural] gave them [Tewa] then will you treat all  
them, your children, as will you love them?*

*In life way, it's dreams are complex and I can't begin to comprehend or  
decode and I don't hope to begin to understand all of the forms that have  
influenced and come in and out of my life.*

*Because of, we do not at this point and time realize the value of the*



*teachings that have been left to us through the mythology and through the web, the whole culture that we have inherited.*

*The American system separates church and state, the Pueblo way of life is very much similar to church and state it is not separate. The rules of the government and kinship is protected religion, the religion is spirituality and how you understand and were taught by it.*

For Kossa, spirituality is an on-going process that deserves considerable attention in daily living. It provides answers and a deeper understanding of why things are done in a certain way. It is because of our spirituality that we have something to live for, something to teach.

*Tah-ah:* Peculiarly, Tah-ah shared her story about what it was like living with her grandmother, who was one of Quannah Parker's wives. She undoubtedly assumed that I knew of Quannah Parker. Quannah Parker is believed to be the first North American Indian who introduced the sacrament of peyote in this country (Biographical Dictionary of the America's, Vol. III, 1991). For this reason the historical Comanche spirituality was not discussed since it is public information. Although, Tah-ah appeared typically grandmotherly there was something mystical about her being. Her storytelling was captivating as she crossed back and forth from her memory to her present reality in regards to a specific time and event.

Asu: The adult children of Asu primarily provided most of the interview material. The storytelling of their personal accounts was spoken from memory. The particular stories that focused on discipline seemed to have a moral, which is typical in Yaqui storytelling. Obviously, the highest regard was given to the topic of spirituality, respect, and disciplinary consequences. Quite clearly, the misgivings that are commonly known in Yaqui mythology are interwoven into everyday life. "Primarily, myths and legends are considered entertaining history and tales as pure entertainment. As a body, the folklore is not considered sacred, although it is associated with native religion and ritual. Some stories are of social importance because they point a moral" (Giddings, 1993, p.18).

For Asu, and her family, spirituality was blended (seemingly unconsciously) in the daily interactions of life. They believed very strongly in the consequence of behavior and related those consequences to a spiritual source. It is my hope that the reader will establish various views of spirituality as expressed by the examples, as spirituality was one of the central focuses of all of the participants.

#### Discussion: Theme Two

Research regarding Native Americans suggest that there is a spiritual presence in everything around us, as well as "...there are stories in everything around us. You just have to know how to look" (Fadden, 1991, p.104). For the most part, the theme regarding spirituality is more easily understood by other cultures in relationship to: mythology metaphysiology, dreams, cosmology, legends, oral narratives, and storytelling. Spirituality

for Natives has been intertwined and overlaps when traditional accounts and teachings are given. This is not to say that spirituality has been generalized in any sense, but to say that spiritual accounts have been richly told and retold to include every reality.

In their cosmology, Indians attempted to explain events that were beyond their control, such as the shifting of winds, hot and cold temperatures, seasonal precipitation, and planetary movements. For example, many tribes observed the constant cycle of the seasons and integrated its circular principles into their records for maintaining history and ceremonial life. Climate, as well as the natural environment, had a strong influence on people's lives, affecting the development of their cultures and world views. (Fixico, 1993, p.21).

Ritual and ceremony have been fertile beds in transmitting the (sacred) spiritual and traditional knowledge of Native life and lifeways. Recently we have seen an effort by Natives and Euro-Americans to recreate some of those teachings from the older oral and written versions to a newer written (academic) form. This written expression serves several purposes, as Hilgendorf, (1985) notes:

Many of these parents [of indigenous children] do not have the knowledge of traditions to pass on to their children, although they may have memories from their own childhood. Realizing that it is possible-- and even desirable-- in the modern, non-Indian world to keep alive their cultural identity, these adults regret that, in a sense,

they are the broken link in the chain of the oral tradition (p.31).

Sarris (1991) goes on to say;

More and more scholars of oral literature are looking to the broader contexts in which these literatures live. Specifically, they are considering that beyond the spoken word, that beyond their perceptual range as listeners and readers, and what that says about their position as literate for and about oral traditions. This is particularly significant in cross-cultural situations (p. 174-175).

As educational systems attempt to teach the spiritual and deeper implications of Native culture, written versions of stories will take on an added importance.

### Theme Three: The Participants Profess That Family Relationships Among Most

#### Native People Have Always Included Extended Family

*Ciye: The old system actually was true that you had children and you raised them, you bequeathed them last and you did those things so they would care for you in your old age and that's the way it was...*

*...from the very time I was young there was expectations by the grandparents, by the parents...*

*As a family member I expected my family members- nieces and nephews, everybody to uphold these traditions, to do them well to lead descent lives.*

*At one time it was plentitude, that a woman must bear children in order to fulfill her role in this life because that is her nature, that*

*was the vessel I extend that to.*

*There is an obligation of the first born son to his parents.*

*There are roles of the oldest daughter, the youngest daughter and middle born daughter and there is a tribal definition of how each one is to behave at one time.*

*...men learn their roles from their mothers and their female relatives. He learns from the males also...*

*A woman has a tremendous responsibility and impact on how that child is going to develop as a male because you treat males and females differently.*

*Believing that there is an invisible force in all things, uh, a state of femaleness, a state of maleness, a state of potency. And within that we are more than just physical beings we are also forces.*

*...so the idea of living collectively has within it a great potency in terms of how one is socialized and how one relates to people.*

*But in Lakota culture you will not see an Indian woman leading the Sundance, see? We are still of that thought, uh?*

In Lakota families, as well as in other Native families there is more than just people. There are responsibilities, obligations, expectations, socialization and sexual roles.

*Equay: And I thought [the elders] were being mean, but they are not, they really care when they correct you.*

*I am a grandmother and a wife... I got eight grandchildren,*

*five boys and three girls and I got two daughters.*

*...when a woman were on their time, in those days, they had to build a little house for them and stay there for four days until their moon is over with.*

Discipline, sexual roles and behaviors were and are important values among the Ojibwe.

*Kossa: Pueblo people and gender is a cultural thing, everything the trees, the flowers, including ourselves and how even the language, well even intonation.*

*...my sisters never talked about their sick time. Therefore quite clearly that belonged to the domain of the woman.*

*Ah...the material world is really gender and it's gendered rightfully, gender specific and it's a way of teaching.*

*First of all, I come from a large family. I learned to live within this family and also extended family and beyond that. All of my relations interacted in some way and so you know it is very difficult to leave the family, I have learned a lot from them.*

Gender, sexual behavior, teaching and interactions were and are of extreme importance among Tewa families.

*Tah-ah: ...when my mother died, uh... I had this one sister and two little brothers and my aunt, my dad's cousin took us over.*

*When I got six years old, my mother took me away from my grandmother.*

*...that's an old story, well my maternal grandmother she was married, she was one of Quannah Parker's seven wives and they had four children.*

*I guess people like myself and a few others- my cousins, are probably considered old fashioned. They lived so that they are not afraid of what's behind them. And uh...they put that role of expectation and we were expected to fulfill them.*

*Tah-ah's nephew in Comanche way: (Personal Communication, 1996).*

*So when children get into trouble I [the principal] tell them [the teachers], don't say let me talk to the father [when they call the student's home].*

*I say; let me talk to the family member that disciplines the child.*

*Which could be on a rotating basis to whomever is there because of the extended family system.*

Among the Comanche, as well as other Native people, extended family fulfilled the role of the immediate family when they were not able. Acceptance and expectation among families were important as they provided a way to survive.

*Asu: We didn't have a choice how we raised our children, we were worried to just survive.*

*Easter, Asu's oldest daughter: When we were brought up they [the adults, parents] were really hard as nails. They weren't going to hurt you but they gave you a lot of discipline, a lot of respect.*



Heart, Asu's youngest daughter: She [Asu] did all of the disciplining because my dad didn't believe in spanking [under extreme conditions spanking was necessary] but she did, she used to be the enforcer.

*My dad taught by example...*

*My husband would not interfere when I was disciplining my kids. I have lived here all the time with my mother and my kids but my mother never told me anything how to discipline them boys. Because we lived our culture that was all we knew...*

Maso, Asu's youngest son: We got to remember that I was in a position where we would get disciplined and that discipline carried over...

*What everybody has to do is use reverse psychology. Edge them [the kids] on to do things they're not supposed to do. And then when they get caught let them pay the consequences.*

*I also remember when we were younger, not only could my mother and father discipline, but the neighbors. You know, the people you hang around with? Let's say my friend's dad, if he caught us doing something he would not only punish his son, he would punish me too. And my mom and dad wouldn't say nothing, as a matter of fact I would get it again from them. Because what was good for one was good for everyone, see?*

Family was a communal relationship, everyone contributed towards the discipline and well being of the families. Many family teachings regarding discipline and the interactions of the extended family were passed down from one generation to the next.

Discussion: Theme Three

When we consider Native families, extended families, their sociological implications and how that has been influenced by culture we are considering something unique in relationship to the Euro-American nuclear family. The Yaquis, like most indigenous people, have a family structuring of interpersonal relationships unique to them. In her research Kelly, (1991) found:

The household is now and has been as far back as pertinent information can be gleaned the most basic unit in Yaqui society. A single house or group of houses that form a household will have a seasonally fluid and long-term shifting of body of inhabitants. Its flexibility makes it a highly adaptive institution, and this adaptability is an important factor in the tenacious survival of Yaqui society. The household is the basic economic unit; its members channel the formation of deeper emotional ties; it is the primary locus of child care; and it contributes to the recruitment of individuals for ceremonial society membership often results from vows, or *mandas*, made by household members (p.31).

The quality of child care as perceived by the child is not determined by the presence or absence of harsh discipline in any direct sense. Child training is expected to be "hard," and in some measure "hard" upbringing can be seen as meaning that the person in charge cares enough to make the effort ( p.38).

We must also consider that since Native families and cultures have been so misunderstood, there continues to be an effort to disseminate accurate information regarding their sociological implications as an attempt to correct stereotypes. Fixico, (1993) elaborates:

Native Americans took a holistic approach in considering their sociocultural relationship with the natural environment and the universe. In particular, they considered the possible negative repercussions of any decisions they might make. The community had to survive; the group's interests had to be placed above the advancement of one person in order to secure and maintain balance in life rather than risking it ( p. 26).

Garrett,(1993-1994) asserts:

One reason why the Indian family is changing rapidly is that family members must work outside the home and the home environment. The closeness of the family has been threatened with the "new survival," in contrast to the practice of earlier years when the family worked closely together to survive in a hostile environment. The hostile environment of today has also presented new stresses for the family, including the pervasiveness of drug and alcohol abuse and the search for independence by so many youth (p. 18-19). Watahomigie, 1995, observed that a few generations ago--before federal HUD housing transformed residence patterns in American Indian communities--"families built their homes around the grandparents" (p. 189). Similarly, we find in other indigenous cultures

the roles and values of extended families. Even traditional European families still live in that type of extended family arrangement.

Many Mexican American families include extended relatives who often live in the same household (Sue & Sue, 1990). Cooperation, loyalty, and respect are emphasized within the family unit. A hierarchy of authority is set giving decision making privileges to elderly family members, parents, and males. Within the family unit are clearly defined gender roles. Fathers assume primary responsibility over the family, while mothers are nurturing and self sacrificing in caring for their husbands and children (Sue & Sue, 1990). Males are raised to be autonomous and females are raised to be dependent (Sue & Sue, 1990; Smart & Smart, 1991); further, neither males nor females are permitted to challenge their assigned roles and responsibilities. To some extent, the traditional family unit and associated values are changing due to urbanization and mobility (Stoddard, 1973). In any event, family dynamics depend substantially on the level of acculturation in the home.

Unfortunately, considerable debate prevails over definitions of ethnicity and ethnic identity. Until Natives develop more published works on this area theories such as the following will influence the research in regards to Native families and culture. Burgess (1978) provides a general definition for ethnic identity as "the character, quality, or condition of ethnic group membership, based on an identity with and/or a consciousness of group belonging that is differentiated from others by symbolic 'markers' (including cultural, biological, or territorial), and is rooted in bonds of a shared past and perceived ethnic interests"(p. 270).

In general, three theoretical models predominate in ethnicity research. The first is Erikson's (1950) individual psychological model, based on developmental stage theory. This model focuses on effects of socialization processes-- how the individual acquires from childhood a sense of group belonging. The second, the social psychological model, incorporates the perceptual, cognitive, and affective processes found in the individual psychological model with social structural features of intergroup comparisons and interactions (Vaughan 1987). Third and most inclusive, the social ecological model, takes into account social, familial, and individual variables within the political historical context (Root, 1992), (Sprott, 1994).

Harmon, (1990) concludes:

While complaining that race prejudice prevented most White Americans from appreciating the common human characteristics of the various races, they did not question the objectivity or utility of their own racial categories. Instead, they believed that those broad categories correspond to important differences which manifested themselves in character as well as physical traits. Although they theorized that the differences arose from disparities in environment and in the pace of natural social evolution, they observed that some differences persisted even after the backward races enjoyed the environment and inspirational example of civilization. Particularly because they attributed such persistence in part to a vaguely defined heredity, they did not consistently adhere to their premise that racial identity was a matter of legal status and culture rather than ancestry ( p. 95).

In retrospect, the campaign to cease Indians from being Indian did not succeed. Today we find a resurgence and a revitalization among Native people to rekindle and strengthen family ties and to freely advance extended family boundaries to include more and more ceremonial kinships, and thus the inter- and intra- tribal relationships have become stronger. Many Native people see the "self" and other Native people as the only thing they have left.

The topic of gender has a significant position among indigenous people. In light of the deeper mythological meaning, I would like to cite several sources and how those meanings have influenced today's roles in most Native Pueblo societies. Among Pueblo people, the sex roles and responsibilities are different and clearly defined as well as constituting ceremonial and family structure. Ortiz, (1969) gives examples:

The principle difference [in sponsor selection in rites for children], however, comes in the selection of sponsors. The Summer parents are not restricted to members of the moiety society and lay assistants, for they may select any Summer adult *of the same sex as their child*. A part of the reason for this interesting divergence is that while the Winter and Summer moieties are identified with maleness and femaleness, respectively, the qualities of both sexes are believed present in the men, while women are only women; in other words, there is a clear relationship of asymmetry between the sexes which is expressed through the moieties.

First, the chief of the Winter moiety is referred to as *father* during the period when he heads the village (from autumnal to the vernal equinox) and *mother* during the other half of the year, when the Summer chief is in charge. The



latter, on the other hand, is always referred to as *mother* throughout the year; he is never called *father*.

Secondly, men may impersonate women in rituals, but never the reverse; thus' when the spirits of Category 6 are impersonated, men come as female spirits, while women are excluded completely.

Thirdly, the standard phrase of encouragement to men about to undertake a demanding task is "Be a woman, be a man," while the phrase to a woman in similar circumstances is simply, "Be a woman."

Fourth and finally, during the naming ceremony when the spirits are addressed, they are for assistance in bringing the male infant to "womanhood and manhood," while the request for a female infant is for assistance to bring her to womanhood only. ( p.36).

Among Lakota, sex roles were defined and sometimes complex in the sense that Ciye' suggested. It is interesting to note that there were deviances from the normative life among the Lakota. Below is an expansion of that and a rare finding, (Albers & Medicine, 1983):

While it is true berdache took on behaviors and activities associated with women in Plains Indian societies, their role did not exactly correspond with that of women. Among the Lakota, for example, Winkte ("wishes to be a woman"--i.e., womanlike) continued to engage in masculine activities. They often accompanied war parties, and they could support themselves through hunting. In addition, they carried on certain activities that were viewed as normative in their role, including:



the naming of children in a ritual way, dispensing herbal medicines, and prognosticating the outcome of war parties. In these and other activities, berdache received a measure of respect and prestige in their community. And even though their social position was not enviable, it was better than that of a man who was a repeated failure as a warrior.

The idea that some Plains Indian women followed masculine roles and behaviors, either on a permanent or situational basis, does not deny the idealized and normative patterns of female passivity and dependence in Plains Indian societies.

In social settings where maleness and femaleness were separate and contrasting spheres, as they certainly were in Plains Indians societies, the roles of manly- hearted women and berdache were sources of mediation. They offered men and women opportunities for displaying cross-sex talents in socially approved ways, and in doing so, they were probably essential to the psychological well-being of peoples who lived in societies with highly dichotomized gender expectations. ( p. 268).

The continuum of cultural specifics in family regarding roles, gender, social implications, respect and discipline are broad and far reaching. Ethnicity is discussed because it is affiliation that creates the ties in Native families and societies. Yet many of the intricacies of family are just as important today as they have ever been. As the literature suggests, no generalizations can be made in reference to Native families their roles, customs and origins.

Theme Four: The Participant's Report That Many Educational Approaches  
Were the Most Powerful Agents in Influencing the World View  
and Personal Philosophies Among Native People

*Ciye': When I was 29 years old I completed my undergraduate work and begun my graduate work and also began to teach at the day school in Porcupine. Then about that time I just found a need to know more and so I as much as apprenticed with a medicine man.*

*So I, my school experience was one of a white public school, I was the only Indian in the classroom.*

*Indirectly, having the knowledge of the culture firsthand, having learned it from people within the culture I think it made me a finer teacher because I could then understand what the life experience was like of my Native students...*

*Because I would blend the two, the academic material with the living material and knowledge of the wisdom of the culture. And indirectly it gives me a personal philosophy which is not or which has not necessarily arisen from just academic studies it actually springs from the wealth from deep within my life as a Lakota person.*

*So it is teaching and learning in both modes, the academic formal mode and the Lakota formal mode which is ceremony and ritual. Then there was the informal, as I see in just learning in labs and what one does the minute one sits down with a group of people.*

*We essentially have to be bi-cultural people, we have to participate and behave in two worlds and understand those two worlds when it is appropriate to do something in one or the other.*

*By assisting him in ceremony I learned the significance of certain acts...  
...just the whole idea that people are no longer telling the stories, you know in the evenings, instead they sit around and watch television.*

*I remember a time when women did not wear trousers, even young women, and middle age women and certainly the elderly they all wore dresses.*

*Now the modern era has given us the possibility of sharing some of this through the printed word which is a modern development...*

*I have great sympathy for those cultures that have been oppressed and have to live in contact with non-Natives for so long, that the Iroquois, Tuscaroras and their members are only 300 people...in the tribe. I have tremendous sympathy for those who have been under pressure for so very long because circumstances, geography, whatever the situation is. And also be able to identify with some of the current forces like coal mining... The southwest and the impact that some of the uranium mining and so forth have had on those tribes. So I feel in that sense, I feel one must be aware of and have a feeling, a attitude about the injustices in this country that are leveling in some cases existing Native populations in terms of health and economic things...*

*The idea of electronic media and television, film and indeed tape recorders, uh, radio and messages coming from printed as well as electronic*

*media... impact for example, consumerism via popular media. Just think what that has done to our people on the reservations in terms of wanting the latest clothing, wanting to have the latest vehicle. It has changed their feelings and their attitude where the standard of white society is the same standard that Native people are aspiring to, in terms of lifestyle and accouterments, you know?*

*But poverty just does something to people and sometimes the way they are living. It is not, but they think from certain perspectives that this is the traditional way of being.*

*...for example, it is possible in white society for white women and Indian women too, to be ministers in Christian churches or what ever the case is.*

From Ciye's examples we learn some very important forms of education in the Native and western worlds. That of formal and informal and what those implications mean to him in Native and western education.

*Equay:* *But when you went to school we were laughed at, because at times, you know, I would use that language [Ojibwe] because those were the things that...my language was very important.*

*I learned by watching, being taught by my parents. My parents used to tell me that, uh... you know, you were given those ears for something you got to use them and the brain that you've been given and those eyes and legs and this body has been given to use it. Use it in a good way.*

*I went to school in Point and then in Lake, and dropped out in Lake. I dropped out in eighth grade then went on relocation.*

*Like I said, a lot of people come to me and they want to learn [traditional ways] themselves, they have to be there, to hear it you know? To take part in it to learn it to be there. And they can't only go there once, they got to go, keep going 'cause once you can't learn it.*

*Get these teachings to the schools. I for myself, I have to say it depends who is teaching them. And if it's a non-Indian teaching them, you know, they have their own ways. But maybe it would be good to have these things taught in those schools that's the way our young generation is going to learn. Maybe they can find ways to...you know, teach, that there is separate rooms for a Indian person to be teaching these, our children these ways.*

*When I was going to school it was really hard because like I said we didn't have hardly...we were poor.*

*...there is a lot of people that knows about those herbs. I don't know what's on TV, they're lazy to go out and pick it or something.*

*Now kids are making bombs out of toilet cleaners and stuff like that.*

*These drugs coming in right now are taking control of those kids, the people.*

Apparently, Equay has had more influence in the formal and informal Native educational experience than in western education.

*Kossa: At this point in my life I think the most important thing that I have as a challenge to both; in terms of teaching in the classroom and out of the classroom is modeling a lifestyle by the way I live it and also in terms of writing what I write.*

*And I teach they [Tewa religion] are no less than any other philosophical way of being.*

*I don't know how knowledgeable of life anybody is we don't know how to measure what intelligence really is. For example, my wife teaches special education and she comes home and I am in awe how they [school system] view intelligence and categorize these people as retarded, you know? Uh... then I think we are created as spiritual people. In some way or another, we are no more or no less than that person who is held back because that is our instruction, Creator's way. That's because we should have respect for all life, and which is true.*

*You learn by watching, you learn by doing, you learn by modeling from the time you were born. Sometimes you got to research and travel the soft part of people. You have to be there to hear and learn, like art is that way. To undergo slowly requires exquisite sensibility because something is with you, you have to be able to hear, to use the senses to learn.*

*My father he was an example problem solver, he was a natural inventor of things. My wife's father was a natural problem solver also. I think that it is inherent in us to be natural problem solvers, otherwise we would surely be lost. My wife's father might be categorized as illiterate, but he knows how to attend to every social situation that he runs into to and uh... he's very good uh.. I think he is gifted. And he also has potential to develop humor about all situations of life. And immediately and freely gives guidance and is able to keep it kindly about what has happened in terms of other people and that is emotional intelligence.*

*I am amazed and amused at archeologists that think that they know it all. They dig up, they dig up whatever they dig up and they give you solutions. But here we are Pueblo people, descendants of those people who built those Pueblo structures and it never occurred to those people [archeologists] to ask us what's happened. Or if they ask us, they ask us with a sense that I know this already but I would like to get your input to compare. But it is not in a sense that we know, we learn that we carry the myth amount of knowledge that has been passed to us through cultural mythology, through language, through various system structures that we developed, that our people developed over the centuries.*

*To seek to learn who I am is what my culture told me in the first place, you know? And these young people don't seem to understand this because these are the kinds of things we need to teach them that have value. And can be used to function in living the American way of life.*

*...that making money isn't the most important in this world.*

*The Bible was available for interpretation out of which grew Christian philosophical orientations which was important to us- America kind of grew out of that, American economy grew out of that.*

*...other philosophical orientations [Pueblo] because I needed transitions from being a Pueblo person to being, to I guess what you would call it, acculturated Indian.*



*I grew up on the reservation and I could live on either side and uh... I experienced the agony and anxiety of making that transition from one to the other.*

*How do I use communication in this world as a Pueblo man, and have to live the Pueblo concept? The progress in society goes so fast, that to me, that somehow it instills in you to know that we... that there is sacred time and that is leadership.*

*The messages are restricted, and are non-verbal in Tewa...*

*Every people that have ever lived upon this earth have developed institutions, so we know that people are institutionalized beings. We know we are sovereign and slaves at the same time, because we're sovereign we developed institutions, yet at a point in time we become slaves to that.*

*But my premise is that no one religion is right or wrong and that there are commonalities in people's life and people's life way. Kossa relates to the whole picture and how all of the influences of today's society are present in the Tewa realm and how they strive to not be influenced by them.*

*Tah-ah: And when she [my mother] was five years old, Quannah Parker sent three of his daughters to Carlisle [the first off reservation boarding school for Indians].*

*And then one day she [my mother] came and uh... and so we got on the train and we came to court. And uh... there, what they did was, or said was the public schools was for themselves*

*[Euro-Americans]. That Indians had a school, which was true it's right here [Oklahoma]. But my mother didn't want me to go to school there, after that I didn't go to school for I didn't know how long.*

*I went to the classroom and I could talk little English.*

*Anyway, we went to the courthouse, they my parents and my aunt and uncle had power of attorney. And there a lady matron took me to a room and their charges was that Indians were dirty and that we had lied. Anyway, we won them and with us is a copy of the court which was 1918 when it was over, February 1918 I was born in 1909. [Tah-ah was the first Native American to go to public school].*

*Then Fort Sill bought us out, bought all of the land and by the way they paid us what they wanted to pay us, just to take over.*

*...my sister had a nice house... I told my cousin go ahead and make arrangements to sell the house. I got \$200 for it, I hired an attorney but she [the attorney] got more money than I did for my sister's house.*

*We just, all we have is what we have, I really don't know what they [other tribal members] have. But it is nothing like what I remember way back there when my grandmother was living.*

Tah-ah's experience with western education is painful as much as it is amazing. Her western education has allowed her to make choices, to work through the buraucracies, to analyze the past with the present.

Easter, Asu's oldest daughter: That's another thing they have with the school kids, they are mouthy and smart then they get in trouble. And they [the school kids] go tell the parents, well the teacher picks on me. How do they [the parents] know? they [the parents] have to go there and find out what the deal is, they can't take their [kids] word for it. I tell the kids they're going to school to learn and while they are there the teachers are the parents and you do what they say.

*They should put people on probation that really do something bad.*

*You had to go to your room and all they [the elders] had to do was look at you, they would go like this [her eyes signaled the direction] and you move out, they wouldn't tell you.*

Maso, Asu's youngest son: "That is something you don't even realize, these [the discussion was 3rd grade students] are just little kids and you have big kids that don't even go to school and they don't do nothing to them. They don't do nothing to the parents who don't get them to school and keep them there. Yeah, but they [the dominant society] are backwards.

*...I mean why would they put you on probation because your kids been late [to school]?*

*They say there is not control for these kids nowadays but it is the people up in the higher offices that have got to be controlling it. Because they are the ones who take the right away from disciplining the kids the way your supposed to.*

Asu's family is supportive of the attempts of western education. They did not feel intimidated by the western educational structure, purpose or practise. This in part could be due to their own secure feelings in identity.

#### Discussion: Theme Four

Native people face the poorest quality of life in the United States; the extinction of tribes, Native languages, cultures, and religions continues (Charleston, 1991). Moreover, if success is measured by one's willingness to forsake his or her cultural identity as Scott (1986) concluded, then many American Indians would not consider dropping out of school a mark of failure. Equay in her discussion on education felt that there was nothing amiss by her dropping out of school. She prides herself on the respect she is given by other Native people as a traditional.

The point of the education is not to integrate individuals into a system, but to allow them freedom from the constraints of the system itself and enable them to alter the system. Natives and

other minority students are often forced to walk in both worlds,  
the traditional White world and the world of their own culture.

Far too often, Native education is a one way street, with Natives  
learning from mainstream American society. At worst, this is

forced assimilation; at best, it is Whites asking, *How can we  
help you?* In fact, there is a long history, largely ignored, of

European and other immigrants learning from American

Indians Reyhner, 1993, (as cited in Wenzlaff & Thron, 1995, p. 338).

Watahomigie (1995) states that, we had no community values in formal schooling; we did not value the educational system. Nel (1994) believes that, learning about mainstream culture is an ongoing process for the Native American child. Teachers should be continuously on the alert for signs of confusion and discomfort. In the process of empowering Native American students, it should be remembered that the objective is not to have the students change their cultural beliefs and behaviors but to help them adapt to specific situations and acquire coping skills. Ethnic conflict resulting in cultural discontinuity is to be avoided. Research on "forced" acculturation point to internal psychological conflicts (Rossi, 1980), and it has been found that coercing Native American children to accept new value systems accounts for part of the high drop out rate and suicide [current rates are not available]. If a coping strategy requires behavioral change, students should be taught not to internalize it but to view it behaviorally as a situational adjustment. Understanding that appropriate behavior in the classroom may be different from appropriate behavior on the reservation is an important lesson to learn. Fostering situationally adaptive flexibility without producing internal confusion, conflict, or disorientation (Hoffman, 1989) is an important goal to strive for in the pluralistic classroom.

Sandler, Vandergrift & VerBruggen found that Program participants [Pascua Yaqui Educational Group Effort] are among the nearly one-third of reservation students who dropout of Tucson high schools each year. These are young people who not only feel out of place in the traditional school system, but also lack roots in their own community. By contributing to their community, these youth, in turn, began to think of themselves as

community members with a stake in what happens. Native educators are beginning to see that educational problems are compounded by lack of identity, among other variables related to assimilation and the influences of the dominant society.

Below is part of a dark educational past. Ellis, (1994) contends: The task of educating tens of thousands of Indian children in the difficult circumstances typical of most reservations meant that the lofty rhetoric of policy makers often crumbled before the withering realities of reservation life (p.89).

In 1889, W. D. Meyers continued the litany of complaints by declaring the Fort Sill School, "a disgrace to the government that owns it." As evidenced, he pointed to the sordid state of affairs at the school, whose superintendent had been dismissed for drunkenness and then inexplicably reappointed, a fact that Meyers said had "wrecked it for the year" (p.101).

As if the scarcity and quality of school employees often proved to be mediocre at best. Attracting reliable employees was difficult under the best of circumstances, due in no small measure to the pay and miserable conditions that prevailed (p.102).

It was no wonder that, after evaluating the agency's school staff in 1885, one of the inspectors described the schools as "asylum [s] for relatives and friends who cannot earn a support elsewhere (p.103).

The irony is that, in the process of beginning their new lives, students combined two worlds. Thus there is the seeming contradiction of going to school yet staying Indian . Students actively practiced the rituals and ceremonies



specifically forbidden by the civilizing programs and deliberately protected their knowledge of prereservation traditions. They also learned English, accepted Christianity, and made careers in the white world ( p. 113).

Considering the dark past in education, it is astounding that Native people continued on, and that some have even become successful in the western educational pursuit. Teaching the educational history of Native people to Native students may, in part, be part of the solution in explaining why Native students respond to western education the way they do.

Wescott, (1991) found both Captain Richard Pratt and the Carlisle Indian School, which he founded in 1879, played pivotal roles in the history of the education of American Indians. As the first off-reservation boarding school for Indian students, Carlisle reflected Pratt's educational philosophy that it was necessary to take away the "Indianness" to save the human being- a philosophy that helped shape government policies toward Indian education for many years.

Little Soldier, (1989) contributes:

The number of Native American teachers, supervisors, and administrators have increased, and the training of teachers and other school personnel now focuses on developing their sensitivity to the special needs of students from diverse backgrounds. The researcher found that while the topic of *what* to teach for cultural relevance--the curriculum and materials-- is clearly important, I wish to discuss the equally important topic of *how* to teach Native Americans in ways that are compatible with their culture. For Native American students raised in traditional cultures, a school learning environment that is insensitive to behavioral



differences caused by cultural patterning can undermine all the good that a teacher may be trying to achieve. Educators have a responsibility to use what is known about traditional Native American family life and child-rearing practices to build a smoother transition from home to school and to create a school environment that is more compatible with that of the home (p. 161-162).

Garrett, (1993-1994) continues "unlike the rote memorization of learning today, observation and listening to stories was the primary way that Indian people learned in earlier years " (p.20). Garrett found that choice was very important in the learning process, with the focus on listening and respect, rather than on achievement. The emphasis was on preserving and strengthening the interdependence of the family, clan, and tribes, rather than on personal gain or wealth. Garcia-Rivera, (1993) argues that "the confusion over meaning and intelligence had tragic results for the Amerindians [*sic*]. "The tragedy continues to our day. I need not go into much detail about the experience of minorities in this country with IQ tests. There is, however, another lesson to be learned from these debates" (p.549). Garcia-Rivera , speculated about whether questions about nature be so simply divorced from questions dealing with our being and non-being. Can nature and spirit be so easily divorced?

Haig-Brown, (1990) supports these views she says "Native teachers and counsellors who have an intimate understanding of Indian traditions...[and] way of life and language, are best able to create the learning environment suited to the habits and interests of the Indian child"(p.231). As a result of her teaching experience along the Canadian border she adds "and I began to understand the nature of border work for First Nations

people: to see the contradictions students continually resolved as they struggled to maintain and develop connection to and knowledge of their heritage cultures while participating in a university program, a clear manifestation of the dominant culture" (p.236).

Some native American students are said to be characterized by a deductive, or holistic, approach to learning (Barwell 1981). This approach to learning proceeds from the general to the particular. An important additional (but frequently discussed) trait of some Native American students is their preference for engaging in trial-and-error learning by means of private rather than public experiences such as those the classroom provides (Vasquez, 1990). Bruchac (1991) adds "Western education today tends to be didactic. Children are told--in books, lectures, filmstrips, and movies--about things, but rarely do they, experience them" (p.104). However, as many educators have observed, the result of such a method is too often learning that is more a conditional reflex than a true understanding.

In the course of addressing education this study takes a look at the higher education experience. Today, a generation of Indian college graduates has begun to change the perceptions of tribal leaders about the value of a college education. Kidwell, (1991) questions:

Should Indian studies programs be concerned with

professional skills or cultural values? Should they teach Indian students

how to be Indian, or should they sensitize non-Indian students to Indian concerns?

Should faculty man the barricades or blockade themselves in the libraries and do

research? Should programs offer courses that challenge stereotypes and criticize past scholarship and thus risk rapid demise, or should they adapt as quickly as possible to the models of existing academic disciplines in order to survive? Or can they do all these things at once? ( p. 45).

"This is one of the most wonderful revolutions in Indian Country, the right to educate on our own terms, said Dr. David Gipp of the American Indian Higher Education Committee. The first tribal college opened on the Navajo reservation in Arizona in 1968. Today there are 26 such colleges, with more than 16,000 Indian students. Perhaps the colleges' greatest success has been a transformation in the way Indians view school. For generations, Indians have been suspicious of formal education, a legacy that dates to the Government boarding schools, where native languages were forbidden and teachers denigrated tribal culture" (Gipp as cited in Johnson, 1994, p. 19). Mow and Nettle (1990) report, several studies show that they [Native] college students encounter difficulties in making cultural adjustments to predominantly white institutions. It is my belief that tribal colleges offer a two year introductory into the world of academe in a way that cannot be presented elsewhere.

Tribal leaders point out how odd it is that those students who are most at-risk receive the least assistance. One would think that if the government was serious about increasing opportunities for Indian youth, then colleges would be providing the funds necessary to aid those youth. Such has not been the case (Tierney, 1991). Unfortunately, this monetary neglect contributes to the difficulties that Native students already face, leaving them with a feeling of unimportance.

Metoyer-Duran (1993) points out that approximately twenty years ago, American Indian studies programs surfaced in academic institutions in the United States. Some institutions emphasized research, while others focused on teaching, cultural activities, and community service functions. As Russell Thornton explained, (as cited in Metoyer-Duran, 1993) the emergence of these programs differed from the histories of most previously existing disciplines. The fundamental difference is that, historically, a discipline came first, followed by its structural component (faculties, courses, and programs). In the case of American Indian studies, the structural element preceded the formalization of intellectual issues. There is still debate over the disciplinary validity of American Indian studies

Gipp & Fox (1991) found that "successful Indian people of today, more likely than not, have adopted to live in two worlds. They are extremely proud of their Indianness. They utilize it to help them achieve in all they do. They often had to educate themselves about their culture and its ramifications for life; they have pursued other forms of education, both formal and informal, to prepare themselves to work successfully within their tribal groups or in whatever vocations they have pursued " (p.61). These educators discovered that many tools the Native students have acquired to prepare themselves to succeed were gained outside the educational system, which not only failed to recognize their cultures and value systems but sought to eliminate them.

The idea of authenticating Native American Education is fairly new in the western sense. By specifically educating Native people in the traditional Native and western worlds and having them develop Native American curriculum would be progressive. There are no methodologies or philosophies set in stone in regards to Native education. I do believe

though, by informing ourselves about the formal and informal, traditional and western, that we have the building blocks for extraordinary potential and discovery.

The Age of Discovery is as much about the discovery of who we are as a species as it is a belated confirmation of the spherical shape of our planet. Yet, despite nearly five centuries of contact, popular understanding of Indians and other indigenous people remains more stereotypical than historical. Indigenous peoples remain ambiguous personae whose communal existence, even human identity, is still questioned by national laws over which they have little or no control.

It is unacceptable for modern nations, scholars, and the general public to continue to preserve, through distorted and half-told histories, a Eurocentric view of the world that ignores our most painful failures and impedes our global struggle for universal equality and justice (Morris, 1993, p. 13).

#### Communication and Education

In different parts of this study the concept of multiple dimensions was referred to in order to explain the complexities that Western America has in dealing with their understanding of Native peoples and Native culture. The area of communication can be revealing and offers explanations for those complexities which eventually develop into misunderstandings. The following literature exemplifies communication as a dimension all its own.

Zepeda (1995) O'odham speakers know the hurt they can impose on one another simply by an utterance or by a denial of words to others. One anthropologist, Matson, (as cited in Zepeda, 1995, personal communication) has observed that the cruelest punishment

an O'odham speaker can impose is denying acknowledgment of another by not speaking to him or her. This is a way of saying the person no longer exists, certainly an unusual punishment. And it is for this primary purpose that speakers must keep constant check on what they say, again being sensitive to the responsibility one must have with words (p.8).

When considering non-verbal messages such as hand gestures, body language, and facial expressions ( including, restricted messages, emotional inflictions, behaviors, spirituality, and the address of several time related events at one time), one can come to appreciate the value of understanding what exactly communication means to Native people and recognize its educational properties. Here are some unique examples given by Hall, (1990):

The Zuni of New Mexico have a predominantly formal culture that exerts a heavy pressure on its members. People simply cannot disregard social pressures and remain in the pueblo. If they want to leave and live with strangers the rest of their lives, they can fly in the face of tradition, otherwise they have to conform. We Americans have emphasized the informal at the expense of the formal. Formally aware people are more likely to be influenced by the past than they are by the present or future (71).

Often however, the conflict between formal systems in different cultures has a tragic outcome. During the Spanish conquest of the New World one of the reasons the Spaniards were able to take so much territory was that their formal systems were so radically different from the Indian system. The Spaniards fought to kill, the Aztecs fought to take prisoners. Like the Plains Indians to the north, the



Aztecs were at a loss in dealing with an enemy who killed in battle. Because this was a formal system the Aztecs were not able to change it in time to save themselves or their society (p.79).

Time for example, is not duration but many different things for them [Hopi]. It is not fixed or measurable as we think of it, nor is it a quantity. It is what happens when the corn matures or a sheep grows up--a characteristic sequence of events. It is the natural process that takes place while living substance act out its life drama. Therefore, there is a different time for everything which can be altered by circumstances ( p. 143).

Hall (1983) acknowledged:

Modern AE people--peoples of American-European heritage--have some difficulty understanding sacred or mythic time, because this type of time is imaginary--one is *in* the time. It is repeatable and reversible, and it does not change. In mythic time people do not age, for they are magic. This kind of time is like a story; it is not supposed to be like ordinary clock time and everybody know that it isn't. The mistake is trying to equate the two or to act as if it were necessary to create a fixed relationship between the sacred and the profane. When American Indian people participate in ceremonies, they are in the ceremony and in the ceremony's time. They cease to exist in ordinary time. For some, sacred time makes the rest bearable (p.26).

An important feature of the Quiche' divination is the use of the body as a sender, receiver, and analyzer of messages. I do not refer to "body language" but



to physiological functions of the body itself, which is read in the same way one reads a book (p.88).

Due to the numerous examples that are available on this topic, I have chosen the ones that had educational relevancy. Some of the other topics that are related to educational communication and do not appear here are: space, kinesic, and varying levels of awareness.

At best, it can be an assertion that communication has been influenced by the assimilation processes. That education and institutionalization are catalysts in the communicative and assimilation processes.

#### Assimilation and Education

As Frank writes in *The Rediscovery of America* (1929), "our root is in the red men; and our denial of this is a disease within us. Assimilation is a touchy topic and is one that is better left alone for some. The interview participants have alluded to varying levels of assimilation among themselves and other Native people. I have found their words along with the following literature to be a source of a hidden agenda known only to some Native and non-Native people. Gardner, (1992) addresses this issue:

The defining of a national identity to be protected from biology required determining what it was that made the American and identifying those who must be barred from access to that claim. Reading two pieces of legislation of 1924, the Johnson Immigration Act (severely curtailing entrance to America) and the Citizenship Act (making Indians Americans), Walter Benn Michaels has demonstrated how both worked to close off access to and reconstitute citizenship

by instituting a notion of culture as that which is held in common by both Indian and American while remaining unattainable to alien populations. The acts defined American citizenship in terms that escaped the necessarily problematic notion of a native identity based wholly on either biology or a technology of instruction; Michael writes, "If...as an inheritance, culture is unlike the citizenship of the melting-pot because it simply cannot be achieved, it is also unlike race and environment in that it cannot simply be inherited (p. 30).

"The distinctive mark of culture is that it must be both achieved and inherited."

Often the terms "ethnicity" and "ethnic identity" are used interchangeably, although "ethnicity" is viewed as a broader umbrella term encompassing discrete concepts, such as ethnic and social boundaries and traits, ethnic solidarity, ethnic conflict, processes of acculturation or assimualtion (Alba, 1990, p.17).

Alba (1990, p.9) purports that white ethnic groups of European, ( origin, e.g., Italians, Germans, Poles) are melding into one European-American ethnic group as a result of their intermarriage patterns and high prevalence of English monolingualism. Alba, following the logic of Gans (1979), contends that as these groups gain in generational depth, they become separated from the immigration experience, resulting in erosion of boundaries, interest groups, residential enclaves, and distinctive ethnic customs. Whatever remains of ethnic affiliation is merely voluntary-- a remnant based on nostalgia, evolving into "ethnic of last resort" (Gans, 1979, p.1). Alba extends this argument to Native American ethnicity (Sprout, 1994, p. 315-316).

Tinker, (1992) a Native American theologian says that "Native American people resist categorization in terms of class structure. Instead, we insist on being categorized as "peoples", even nations with a claim to national sovereignty based on ancient title to our land. Whether we be classed as "working class" or "the poor", such classification continues the erosion of the group's cultural integrity and national agenda" (p. 314).

Identity is one of the few authentically Native characteristics that remains. Here is Larson's, (1994) discussion: "The tension between insiders and outsiders in a variety of situations provides much of the conflict in life and literature. This kind of conflict can foster an identity crisis when a member of a group is transformed from insider to outsider. Identity is comprised of a number of outside and inside elements" (p.495). Complications are, such as when we are with family, we are insiders. In many other social settings we are outsiders. This general dialectic becomes greatly intensified when discussed specifically within the post-colonial situation of Native people.

The complexities of assimilation of Native peoples is shared by Meyer (1991) she states:

For native groups that survived initial epidemics and depopulation, ideological consensus facilitated political cohesion. The ability to present a unified front when dealing with Euro-American enhanced a group's power, adaptability, and autonomy. Attempts to forge alliances and confederations illustrate that some natives recognized this. Small groups and those unable to mediate internal differences were at a greater risk of Euro-American domination. This point is presented most clearly by reference to the extremes. Pueblo groups, veritable

theocracies in which fused religious and political institutions ensured conformity to group ideals, fared much better in their dealings with Euro-Americans than did the White Earth Anishinaabeg [for example] (p. 370).

Davis (1994) shares one of the many versions of the dominant influence among Native people "There is something painful in the reflection that these people were once numerous, and that by our approach they have been reduced to a few. It is natural that we should feel adverse to the admission that the true causes of their decline are to be found among us. Hence we have sought the seat of the disease among them..." (p. 215).

Clemmer, (1994) gives us another world to view, similar to other Native peoples yet symbolically distinct:

Like the Hotevilla Traditionalists [Hopi], they [the Mohawk], refused electricity. They embraced the vision of the Two-Row Wampum Belt, signifying a "treaty made with the Dutch in the 1600s. The two parallel rows of purple beads on the wampum belt represent the two nations or ways of life traveling along the same river...One nation or way of life has the canoe and the other a ship or vessel. In the canoe is the Indian with his own land, government, language, and spiritual beliefs and ceremonies. In the other vessel is the white man and his culture. The treaty specified that the Indian in his canoe and the white man in his vessel are to travel side by side in peace and harmony, they are never to legislate over one another nor to impose the other's religion. If an Indian chooses to go into the vessel of the white man, he must give up the way of the canoe and vice versa."

The meaning of the symbols is clear, but the meaning itself has become a symbol: "Traveling side by side" means a kind of community integrity and cultural equality that, in itself, symbolizes political and economic independence, despite the fact that communities and individuals are so entwined with each other all over the world that true separateness is undoubtedly impossible and undesirable (p. 154-155).

While so many Hopi lived in grinding poverty, the Traditionalist movement provided an alternative interpretation of life for those Hopi who had no economic alternatives. Embracing ceremonialism, even if not participating in it fully, and rejecting materialist ideology provided, for those in poverty, a degree of dignity that could not be acquired through material possessions (p. 157).

There is so much historical and cultural influences that comprise education for Native people, that as responsible educators we need to address those that are the most apparent. Assimilation, acculturation, immigration, citizenship, ethnic affiliation, nations, identity, autonomy, poverty and dignity are critical discussions that will help to heal the failed attempts to educate Native people in the past. Each of the five participants have expressed the importance and relevancy of education, both in the western and Native sense. It is up to us to make education the solution. We are approaching the calm before the storm.

#### Summary

In Chapter IV, the four themes that emerged in this study were identified and described, subsequently their operational definitions followed. Data supporting each theme

and discussion of the literature relevant to each theme were provided. It may appear that several themes had overlapping literature in more than one area. This descretion is entirely left up to the reader, as you will find there were no identifiable boundaries in any one topic in dealing with Native philosophies.

As concisely as possible, in theme one, careful consideration was given to the diversity of the five Native Nations that were represented in this study, which allowed for a multicultural overview regarding respect found in Native philosophy provided by the literature.

Theme two was supported by the literature which stressed and explained the importance of spirituality as a cultural practise in Native life and lifeways.

The complexity of the diversity among Native people really began to take hold in theme three where the discussion of family, gender, roles and social implications were considered, the literature supported this diversity in a way that was unique to each Native group.

Theme Four focused on education and was richly upheld by the amounts and quality of literature on education, communication, and assimilation. The literature discussion clearly distinguished Native people in a cultural text.



## CHAPTER V

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Summary

The purpose of this study was to describe what five elders of various Native communities acquired in terms of knowledge about their Native philosophical teachings. Those Native Nations/communities were represented by the Lakota, Ojibwe, Santa Clara, Comanche and Yaqui interviewees. This study sought to answer questions regarding: what was meaningful to elders in the acquisition of knowledge related to aboriginal teachings and how they continued to learn this knowledge as a life long process. It was my hope that this information would deepen and direct the delivery of education to Native students. The need for this study was presented in Chapter I.

Furthermore, I feel that this particular study incorporated several tangible layers of interviews, observation and triangulation in the qualitative process. There was travel involved in the research, participation in large social gatherings and family get-togethers, as well as exploration in environmental homelands. There was also time that was spent in reflection which in many cases turned into prayer. Chapter II contained the design and procedure of this research project. In Chapter III, each interviewee's story was told with a format that provided the reader with the following information: (1) background information, (2) environmental/geographical identity (3) cultural influences (4)



relationships, and (5) formal and informal education. In Chapter IV, the experiences of all five interview participants were combined and analyzed. Commonalities were studied and themes provided. Four themes were apparent from this study. The themes are listed and summarized as follows.

Theme One: The Concept of Respect is Referred to and is Applied to Everyday Living and Lifeways. It is so Highly Revered Among the Participants That They Believe That No Kind of Learning or Teaching Could go on Without It

Respect which encompassed philosophy, world view, cultural identity, ceremony and ritual, logic, quest/seek knowledge, wisdom, environment, and origin, was the foundation for establishing any specific type of information and awareness.

Theme Two: Spirituality is a Cultural Principle That Permeates Every Aspect of Native Life as Taught to the Participants by Their Relatives and Ancestors

Spirituality was interwoven in the mythology, metaphysiology, dreams, cosmology, legends, oral narratives, and storytelling, and was called cultural practise.

Theme Three: The Participants Profess That Family Relationships Among Most Native People Have Always Included the Extended Family

Family has always included the extended family, sociological implications, ethnicity, and gender and has affected Native philosophies.

Theme Four: The Participants Report That Many Educational Approaches Were the Most Powerful Agents in Influencing the World View and Personal Philosophies Among Native People

Education which encompassed traditional Native Education, contemporary education, assimilation, communication, justice, economy, and religion have been some powerful agents in influencing the world views and personal philosophies of Native people.

The knowledge that was gathered from all of these sources were absorbed by me, the interviewer, and a measurement instrument. Above all, the mystery of the spirit that was alluded to so frequently throughout the interviews, directed and created a memorable experience that can not be duplicated due to the spontaneity and the mood of what was happening at the time. Truly, I believe, that we (everyone involved in this research) have unintentionally contributed to a genuine Native American qualitative research with all of its complexities and obscure meanings.

#### Reflections

This study emphasized the need for collecting oral philosophies in an attempt to present to the world of academe an authentic representation of what Native American philosophy is for the Native people and what it could and should be for the non-Natives. Within the worlds of the Native populations are rich and beautiful diversities unlike no other. The education of Native people has yet to developed to the point where philosophical debate becomes the norm. Our responsibility as educators has so much positive and colorful potential that no matter where you start your teachings on the Native American philosophical continuum, you will be enriched by your attempt. This research in no way suggests that the depth of knowledge on respect, spirituality, family, and education

that does exist was conveyed, but it attempted to present authentic Native knowledge that goes beyond the surface content that plagues academe today.

#### Conclusions

This study concluded that Native Educators teach Native families and extended families the importance for Native parents and children to be cognizant of respect and its role in Native world views. Some native educators in education have communicated the deeper and more profound aspects of spiritual principles as a way of living that will stress the importance of respect, family, gender, and education. It was clear that spirituality was not seen as a religion but as a life way.

While the participants of this study appreciated the Euro-American elements of education they still felt very strongly that the Native people who have the experience are the most qualified to teach the traditional values. The emphasis placed on gaining knowledge and learning in a western sense must be shared with the knowledge found among most Native people that this might be the way to disseminate the cultural knowledge.

#### Limitations

1. This study was conducted in five geographical locations within the United States. Traveling to the home and home community of each participant provided crucial information for the data collection. For that reason, two to ten days were spent at each site for the duration of the interviews. All but one participant was not known to the researcher prior to the interviews. Due to the distance, and other communicative factors, any information that was not collected at the interview time remains unknown.

2. This study was limited by unknown or forgotten materials, distance, and (in one instance) the sanction against giving away religious information and its secrecy from outsiders. However, I sensed that all the participants spoke openly and truthfully, the limitations did not interfere with the data regarding world views.

#### Recommendations

The following recommendations are suggestions for further study. They are provided for any educator interested in Native American philosophical research, including educators in unrelated fields and interests. These recommendations are also relevant for other professionals and all peoples who have a desire to understand Native culture.

1. I found that Native educators and Native people have a need for a contemporary perspective of Native American education that is principally derived from, and informed by, the prayers, the thoughts, orientations, and cultural philosophies of Native people themselves. Due to the diverse atmospheres among schools, students, parents, teachers, teacher educators and administrators, specific detail on how to implement these recommendations in a practical way must be left up to each individual. The interview participants provided excellent examples and were not limited to: one to one mentoring, observation, participation, initiation, research and life experience. Traditional and western education included the formal and informal settings, these teachings can and may overlap when necessary. In order for me to generalize any method as a blanket treatment would take away from the study. Educators can explore and find creative ways to present Native world views and in that process customize a method that will work specifically for their community. That this perspective include the values and

beliefs of Native people and that those individuals with eminent persons credentials be utilized.

2. I perceived that Native educators and Native people have a need to see the development of written literature in grades K-12, including higher education that is consistent in addressing the spiritual context of Native culture. The literature in texts, magazines, novels and other media should present spiritual principles as a way of life not a religion. A list of references of books, videos, films, CD's, theater drama's, radio and television programming must be available.

3. In support that in reference to Native philosophy and world views, Native people need more access to media for making their voices heard. These voices should be heard on national radio and television, in film and video if Native people are to become part of the multi cultural experience. National public radio buys Native programs this resource could be utilized.

4. I sensed that Native educators and Native people would like to see more research in developing a curriculum that asks Native students to seek and learn who they are in the same manner that this seeking for knowledge is asked of in the home and home community.

5. I conclude that Native educators would like to see more research given to the area of human communication among Native people.

The evolutionary condition of contemporary Native philosophy should be afforded continued research and study. As suggested in the literature the more we learn of others, the more we in turn learn of ourselves. It is the responsibility of Western educators to see

to it that the topic of this research does not end here, but has a place in the establishment of education. I wish to close with the words of Booth & Jacob (1990):

As we turn to Native American cultures for their wisdom, however, it is important to keep in mind that their cultures and relationship with the natural world will not provide any instantaneous solutions to the problems Western culture is presently facing. Cultures, or selected bits of one or two, cannot and should not be arbitrarily grafted to one another.

Native American traditions, as in all cultures, are embedded in a particular context. The impact and meaning of a tradition stems from lifelong conditioning, preparation, and participation. It is built into the language, into the way day-to-day life is lived and experienced over time, and within a specific physical/social context. Attempts to borrow culture, whether it be wholesale or piecemeal, are doomed to failure.

If we ignore this fact, we risk harm not only to ourselves, but to Native Americans as well. There is a delicate line between respectful learning and intellectual plundering. Richard White questions our casual and constant habit of using the Native American as a symbol without reference or regard to real Native Americans or their attitudes and feelings. In doing so, White argues, we are just as guilty of using and exploiting these cultures as we are when we steal their lands or their lives and spirits.

But there are less imperialistic approaches to Native American cultures. They can be studied as a contrast to our own destructive relationships with the natural world, and as a reminder that positive relationships can and do exist. An open hearted and respectful investigation of Native American cultures, particularly when members of these cultures

voluntarily share with us their understandings and perceptions, can help us discover new directions in which to travel to realize our own potentials. As a Pueblo has commented:

"There are hundreds of religions in this country, and still you white people are searching for something else. We are not searching--we are already there. You don't have to join us: you are already there too. You just have to realize it" (42-43).

As a first generation high school graduate in my immediate family and among the few high school graduates in my extended family, I have become keenly aware of who we are and what we have as Native people. Partially by pursuing a higher education and partially by life ways I understand why I am saddened by the loss of values, beliefs, land, lives and spirit of the people. Education has been a long, hard and lonely road for me and yet it has given me the tools to express that is in my mind. It is my hope that through these words and the work I have presented that other Native people will allow their spirit to guide them on their path to a deeper understanding of who they are.



APPENDICES

APPENDIX A  
COVER STORY

March 25, 1996  
Vivian Delgado  
550 Carleton Ct. #211  
Grand Forks, ND 58203  
(701) 777-9772

Dear \_\_\_\_\_:

Your name was highly recommended to me as a possible person to interview for my graduate study research in Native American philosophy. Philosophy is the study of truth, it looks at wisdom, beliefs, feelings and how people think. I would like to travel to your home or any designated area in your community to ask you questions relating to your belief system. My role as the researcher is to listen carefully, you will do the talking. I need a minimum of eight hours in order to allow you to cover the most important areas concerning Native American (tribal affiliation went here) teachings. I can spend two days (or more if necessary) recording in any combination of hours depending on what would be more convenient for you.

The Native Nations that were selected for this study are: Lakota, Anishnabe, Santa Clara, Comanche and Yaqui. An individual from each personhood that represents the traditional beliefs was selected. Be aware that I am totally honored to learn from you and add your knowledge to my scholarly work.

Please note that the information gathered is done on a volunteer basis, however, I would be glad to provide some form of reasonable gratuity that is acceptable in your culture. Be sure to indicate your preference.

I am certain the reward you will feel in your participation of this study is the reassurance that other Native people will see the survival of your knowledge for generations to come. Time is a factor and your immediate response is necessary.

Sincerely,

Vivian Delgado      Doctoral Student/University of North Dakota

---

PLEASE COMPLETE THIS SCHEDULE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE AND  
RETURN IT IN THE SELF ADDRESSED STAMPED ENVELOPE.

My proposed schedule is:

Does this schedule work for you?  
It NOT please indicate a schedule:

Place:

Place:

Date:

Date:

Time:

Time:

Location:

Location:

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

APPENDIX B  
QUALITATIVE RESEARCH CONSENT STATEMENT  
UNIVERSITY OF NORTH DAKOTA

Participant's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you for agreeing to let me interview you about Native American philosophies which will allow me to complete my research for my graduate program. My purpose is to describe through interviews relevant philosophical teachings and practical application in education. It is expected that this dissertation will be published. Please complete the following questions: (Yes or No)

I would like to be given credit for my contribution. \_\_\_\_\_

I would like to remain unknown. \_\_\_\_\_

I agree to be audio recorded. \_\_\_\_\_

I do not agree to be audio recorded. \_\_\_\_\_

I would like a copy of the Findings of the finished study. \_\_\_\_\_

I would not like a copy of the Findings of the finished study. \_\_\_\_\_

Your benefits for assisting me will be the documentation of your unique views for present and future use. My benefits will be the experience of participating in a qualitative research project. I will respect your decision in how much you are willing to participate; therefore, there will be no risk to you in allowing me to talk to you about Native American teachings.

Respectfully,

\_\_\_\_\_  
Doctoral Student, UND  
550 Carleton Ct. #211  
Grand Forks, ND 58203  
(701) 777-9772

I have read this consent statement and agree to the conditions specified above.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Dr. Janet Ahler, Doctoral Advisor  
P.O. Box 7189  
University of North Dakota  
Grand Forks, ND 58202  
(701) 777-3158

APPENDIX C  
LEAD IN QUESTIONS FOR:  
QUALITATIVE RESEARCH INTERVIEWS

**Definition: philosophy- a general set of beliefs about your existence based on (protected) generational wisdom that has influenced how you think and feel.**

1. What is your philosophical and/or working definition of wisdom?
2. Have you been taught by an elder in your own traditional way either personally or indirectly? If so, what has this experience meant for you?
3. Have you had the experience of teaching in an educational institution as an elder? If so, what has this experience meant to you?
4. What are your thoughts and feelings about a philosopher's responsibilities?
5. What are some identifiable philosophical practices and activities in your opinion?
6. What experiences have you had regarding cross-gender mentoring in the Native communities?
7. What experiences have you had with multi-cultural and inter-tribal mentoring?
8. What experiences have you had with informal and/or formal mentoring relationships?
9. What do you see as the challenges for teaching "wisdom" in your traditional culture?
10. What are your views on integrating Native American philosophy in Western educational philosophy?

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